

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



IPIS
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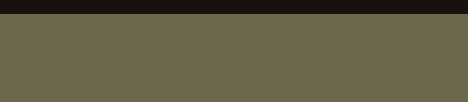


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FROM THE CHAIR

In the past year, the international scene was marked by several high-intensity armed conflicts, with peace-building efforts and diplomacy being cast aside by military solutions and a new global arms race. Peace actors saw their window to engage — to bring their perspective on conflict resolution — greatly reduced. This context poses significant challenges to a research institute committed to durable peace, sustainable development, and human rights.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), violence in the east further escalated. Dozens of armed groups (including ADF and M23) wreak havoc, displacing millions of people. The UN Special Envoy to the Great Lakes warned that regional tensions risk to result in a direct confrontation between the DRC and Rwanda. Against this background, (inter)national observers worry about the decision to withdraw the UN stabilization mission (MONUSCO), despite its unpopularity and inability to end the instability in the east. While IPIS continued to develop its work on natural resources in the region, our research highlights the underlying dynamics of the conflict, being rooted in deficient governance and violations of international and humanitarian law as well as in endemic poverty, social injustice, and long-standing grievances.

The Sahel region experienced significant political, security, and humanitarian changes that further complicated the challenges in this already volatile area. The most notable political event was the coup

in Niger on July 26, 2023, which overthrew President Mohamed Bazoum. This coup was part of a broader trend of political instability in the region, with anti-Western sentiment playing a significant role in the narratives surrounding these events. The security situation deteriorated further with an increase in violence involving various armed groups, and the humanitarian situation worsened due to ongoing conflicts, climate change, and economic challenges.

In October, following Hamas' gruesome attack in southern Israel, Israel invaded Gaza with a display of excessively brutal force, which led to the indictment of the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu for war crimes by the International Criminal Court later in 2024. IPIS and its partners scrutinized arms exports and transfers through Belgium to Israel, eventually leading to mitigating actions by the federal and regional governments.

We also witnessed the prolonged war in Ukraine. As the Kimberley Process failed to address the connections between the Russian diamond industry and the financing of the conflict in Ukraine, the G7 countries eventually announced coordinated measures to restrict the entry of Russian diamonds into Western markets. While the G7's push for transparency and traceability is important, discussions have become entangled in geopolitics, self-interest lobby campaigns, and challenges of alignment with the needs and concerns of non-Western countries.



Highly mediatized conflicts that dominate the news risk overshadowing other situations where widespread human rights violations take place. In the extractive sector in a fragile state context, structural violence is often still part of daily life for (artisanal) miners and local communities, despite international efforts to strengthen responsible business conduct. Our research on the Williamson diamond mine in Tanzania highlights the severe challenges in securing access to remedy and restoring community relations after serious human rights abuse. Next, the global energy transition further increases pressure on mineral-producing countries and their communities. Drawing from its research on the impact of existing responsible sourcing initiatives, IPIS pointed at weaknesses and unintended consequences of top-down initiatives.

This annual report, presented in a new format, brings evidence to IPIS' extensive engagement on these various challenges. Our presence in thematic networks and platforms, close coordination with partners, and outreach through lectures and presence in the media assured that our findings reached the right audiences to ensure that the relevant stakeholders are well informed with reliable information and policy advice.

Backed by grants from the Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD), the European Union (FPI), the governments of the United States and the Netherlands, and various other donors and partners, IPIS has experienced significant growth over the last years. To consolidate this growth, our staff took important steps to strengthen internal administrative processes. IPIS' maps are more than a shiny visual: they require underlying databases and rigorous data management. We have further improved our scientific methods and data collection processes. I would like to thank the research personnel and support staff for delivering high-quality reports and policy advice, maintaining our partnerships, and building IPIS further into a research institute of excellent reputation.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow board members and the director for their commitment to the good governance of IPIS. Together we have the privilege to guide IPIS in a turbulent time where its relevance is uncontested. I look forward to seeing our organization develop further along this way in the forthcoming years.

Johan Swinnen, IPIS Chair

ACTIVITY REPORT

Since November 2022, IPIS is executing a three-year program funded by the European Commission's Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI). With the program, we aim to address drivers of conflict and to promote the fulfillment of human rights, sustainable governance of natural resources, climate justice, and environmental protection.

The research component of the program focuses on drivers of existing and emerging conflicts in African countries south of the Sahara.

A major research topic under the FPI program is the impact of European regulations regarding corporate behavior in high-risk areas and fragile states. In 2023, IPIS' research focused on the implementation of the Conflict Minerals regulation and on potential unintended consequences of the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDD). A key question is whether existing and upcoming laws on due diligence requirements for companies contribute to durable peace, sustainable development, and human rights at the upstream level.

Together with our African partners, we also focus on diamond governance and specific conflict hotspots, and provide recommendations to decision-makers on how to mitigate risks related to climate change, pastoralism, the energy transition, illicit mineral flows, and environmental degradation caused by the extractive industries. This resulted in research on diamond governance in the Democratic Republic of

Congo (DRC), Zimbabwe and Tanzania and ongoing research on the human rights and environmental impacts of the recently constructed Niger-Benin oil pipeline in Benin. More topical analyses were brought to policymakers and practitioners through the periodical IPIS briefing, including on the shifting power balance and instability in the Sahel, the role of March 23 Movement (M23) in eastern DRC, and the traceability of diamonds. Ultimately, research findings should lead to debates and action to address the root causes of conflict such as the unfair distribution of benefits from natural resources.

The FPI program further enables IPIS to continue to support the members of the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition, with whom we defend the rights of communities impacted by diamond mining. We also aim at strengthening other grassroots coalitions such as the Kufatilia network of NGOs in DRC, which advocates for the formalization of the artisanal and small-scale mining sector and the rights of mining communities.

Building on the research and views of our partners, we jointly reach out to decision-makers to support them in identifying and tackling conflict drivers. With its African civil society partners, IPIS undertakes joint grassroots-level studies to inform (inter-) governmental and corporate decision-making. To make sure that grassroots perspectives are heard beyond the local level, we set up civil society campaigns, and issue policy advice papers and solution-oriented narratives about our research results.



NATURAL RESOURCES

Mapping mineral supply chains to understand their dynamics and impact

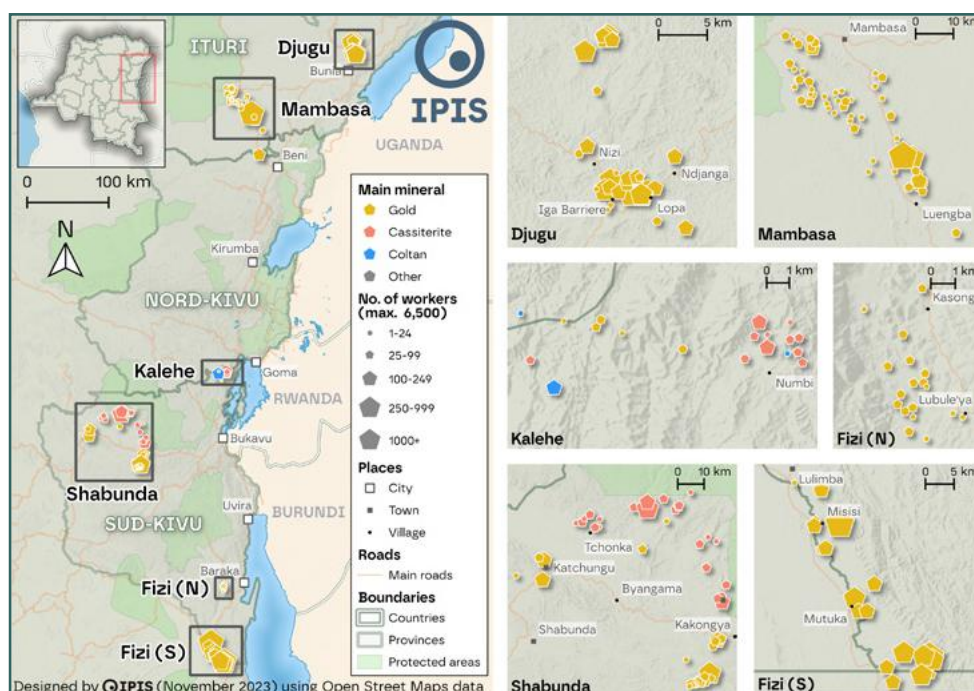
Mapping artisanal and small-scale mining supply chain in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Supported by USAID and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

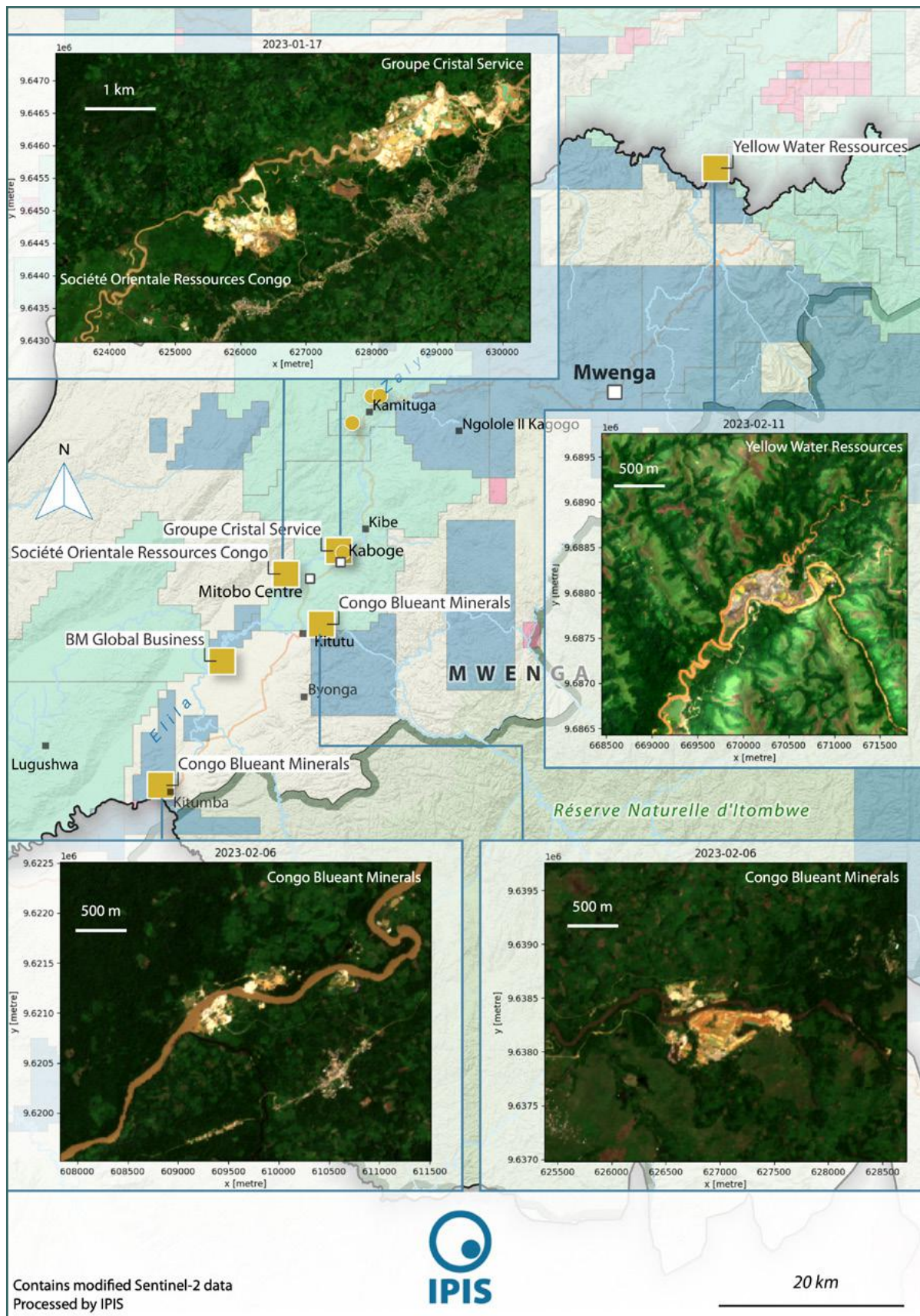
In 2023, IPIS pursued its efforts to provide observers, suppliers, and policymakers with reliable data to understand artisanal mineral supply chains. With the support of USAID and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IPIS' research teams conducted over 330 mining site visits in the provinces of Ituri, Tshopo, Haut Uele, North- and South Kivu, Maniema, and Tanganyika in the DRC. The teams collected primary data about the interference of armed groups, the types of minerals mined, mineral pricing, worker demographics, trade routes, and environmental issues. IPIS analyzed trends in a comprehensive report and uploaded the data on its interactive webmap of DRC

and open data dashboard. IPIS also compared data collected over 4 years of site monitoring to assess the evolution of the security situation and shared results with partners of the Madini (Minerals for Peace and Development) project.

Research focused on the linkages between mining, conflict, and insecurity in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), and evaluated why current responsible sourcing initiatives have failed to decrease armed interference in mining, let alone positively impact security overall. IPIS also identified drivers of insecurity in ASM beyond direct conflict financing



◀ Mining site visits conducted between 2021 and 2023 for the Madini (Minerals for Peace and Development) project.



- ▲ Satellite images of the semi-industrial exploitations in Mwenga territory (South Kivu). Contains modified Sentinel-2 data processed by IPIS.

and armed interference. These include the presence of roadblocks along mineral routes, the omnipresence of former rebels at mining sites, as well as tensions around unequal access to mineral resources due to discrimination (e.g. based on ethnic allegiance), and gender inequality. The latter study also described the risk of negative effects that formalization and responsible sourcing initiatives can have on women's positions in the mining sector.

Additionally, the international rush for DRC minerals entails some security risks: there is a growing number

of semi-industrial exploitations, that disregard legal obligations, use questionable security arrangements, instrumentalize patronage networks, and undermine social cohesion.

Researchers presented their results on several occasions to enable Congolese actors along the upstream part of the supply chain to benefit from the data collected and to discuss the underlying challenges for local mining governance.

Publications



[Analysis of the interactive map of artisanal mining areas in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo \(2023 update\)](#)



[Securing insecurity: Semi-industrial gold mining and violence in Mwenga, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo](#)



[Increasing awareness of policy reforms on gender equality issues in artisanal and small-scale mining in eastern DRC: Case study of the Numbi, Nzibira and Nyabibwe sites](#)

Understanding the challenges related to human activities near the Okapi Wildlife Reserve to restore peace

Supported by USAID

The major expansion of artisanal and small-scale gold mining operations, including in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve (OWR) has caused tensions between native inhabitants, miners, armed actors, officials, and conservationists in the western part of Mambasa territory. IPIS visited 41 mines to study the security, environmental, and governance challenges in the area.

Insecurity persists due to undisciplined FARDC forces that are contracted to secure privately owned mining concessions in or next to the Reserve. These soldiers extort local communities at illegal roadblocks and expel miners from ASM sites on behalf of their employers.

Satellite images and observations on the ground demonstrate an intensification of mining operations along the Ituri River and the diversion of the river from its riverbed. Widespread use of mercury and

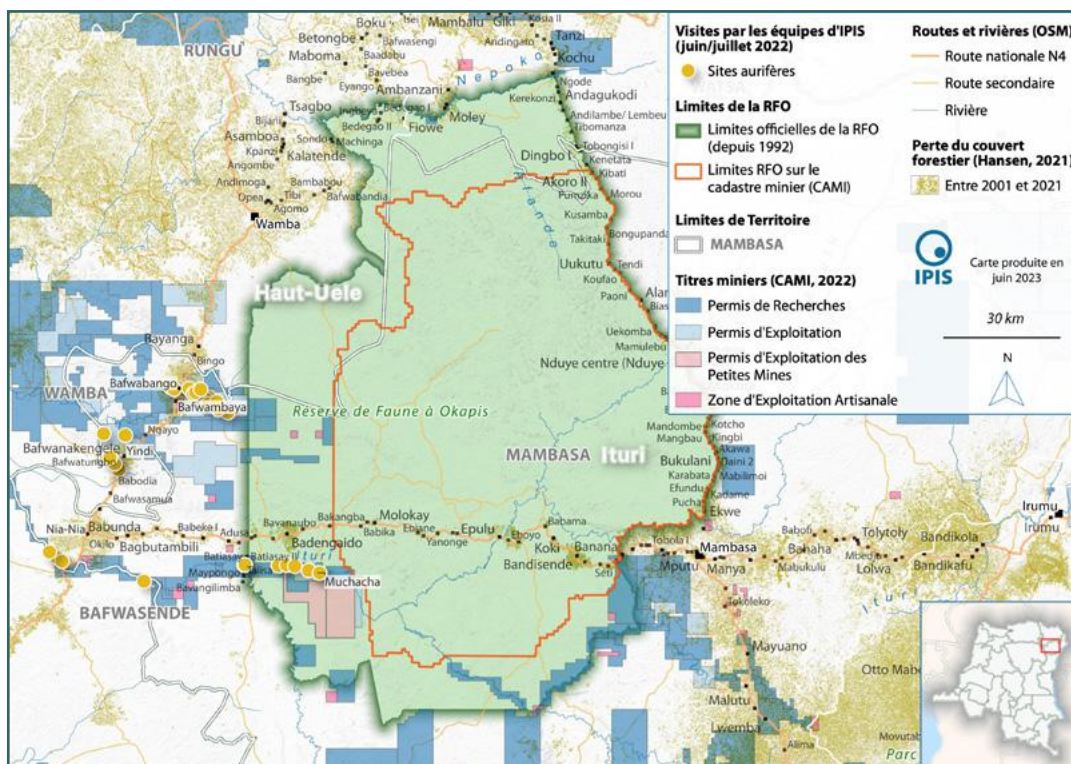
deforestation have resulted in the pollution of the river and the destruction of surrounding ecosystems.

Government oversight and regulation are routinely undermined, but a recent map of the Okapi Wildlife Reserve published by the Congolese Mining Cadaster (but not approved by the Congolese Government) has also caused serious confusion. Shrinking the size of the reserve, the map places various mining concessions outside of its boundaries, thus legitimizing their continued operation.

Publication



[Mapping of artisanal mining sites in western Mambasa, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)



▲ The OWR boundaries set in 1992 and those published by the DRC Mining Cadaster (adapted from an IPIS map in Verweijen et al., 2022).

Mapping cobalt

Supported by the International Labor Organization (ILO)

Cobalt is an essential mineral component of electric car batteries and renewable energy technologies such as wind turbines and solar panels. As a result, cobalt demand is expected to boom with the acceleration of energy transitions. A significant part of the global cobalt production originates from the Democratic Republic of Congo, where both industrial and artisanal and small-scale productions take place, in the provinces of Haut-Katanga and Lualaba.

While child labor is often a prime source of concern in the cobalt supply chain, many other challenges interplay (e.g., conflictual relations between industrial mines and local communities, governance issues, environmental impacts, etc.). The sector is characterized by a tense but inevitable coexistence between large-scale mining (LSM)

operations and artisanal miners. Indeed, many miners work informally on industrial concessions. The phenomenon of residential mining is also particularly notable as local inhabitants of neighborhoods or villages adjacent to ASM or LSM sites, dig for cobalt in their houses or on their private plots.

In 2023, IPIS provided a context analysis to the International Labor Organization detailing the historical context of cobalt mining, the specificities of the sector, and its main stakeholders. IPIS also listed all data available on both industrial and artisanal cobalt mining to obtain a comprehensive geospatial dataset of mining sites in Lualaba and Haut-Katanga. Researchers used satellite imagery to verify the existence and extent of industrial mines at the provided locations.

Engagement with stakeholders involved in responsible sourcing

Discussing findings on taxes and levies paid by Congolese artisanal miners and suggesting harmonization recommendations

Supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Cleaner supply chains and more effective mineral governance are key to improving security in mining areas in eastern DRC and promoting regional stability. Because of its importance for the formalization of the ASM sector and for security, the Madini project deployed various efforts to better understand the fiscal regime in eastern DRC and the Great Lakes region. To address a significant data gap and inform policy, IPIS performed, a large-scale field study on taxation, both legal and illegal (levies), at the level of artisanal mining sites in Ituri and South Kivu. After several stakeholder consultations that aimed to build strong and actionable recommendations, the report was published in early 2023.

IPIS presented its findings at several events addressing the artisanal mining tax regime to inform measures aiming to better apply national and provincial tax standards at mining sites. In March, IPIS presented the results of its study in Kinshasa and discussed taxes and payments in the mining sector in the presence of all governmental departments active in the artisanal mining sector and/or legal and illegal levies. The Madini team organized a two-day workshop with the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in Bujumbura to discuss tax harmonization between the countries of the region. IPIS also held exchange sessions with stakeholders involved in

taxation and the provincial mining monitoring committees (CPS) of South Kivu and Ituri, in Bukavu and Bunia.

The data collected and resulting recommendations also fed conferences at the Egmont Institute in Brussels and the OECD Forum for Responsible Mineral Supply Chains in Paris. Together with members of the Madini consortium, IPIS discussed the obstacles facing taxation, regional opportunities, and some governance challenges.



▲ SAESSCAM office (former name of SAEMAPE) in Luema.

Publication



[Taxes and levies at artisanal mining sites in South Kivu and Ituri: how much does an artisanal miner pay?](#)

Project page



<https://ipisresearch.be/project/madini-strengthening-regional-stability-in-the-great-lakes/>

Capacity enhancement with mining cooperatives in eastern DRC

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

Mining cooperatives are key actors in the formalization of the artisanal mining sector in eastern DRC. As part of its Belgium-funded program, IPIS aims to strengthen the capacity of cooperatives in targeted mining zones. In 2023, IPIS organized workshops with SAEMAPE the governmental service in charge of supporting mining cooperatives, and more

generally, supporting the artisanal mining sector. The academic research center CEGEMI and two CSOs (ACADHOSHA in the province of South Kivu and Maniema Liberté in Maniema) held training sessions for SAEMAPE agents who will later assist cooperatives in zones where needs have been identified.

Training on ASM formalization, conflict minerals, and conflict mapping to representatives of geological services

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

To disseminate its expertise, IPIS participated in PanAfGeo-2, a project offering training sessions to the geoscientific cadres of the Geological Surveys of African countries. In 2023, IPIS took part in two training sessions. The first one, in Douala, Cameroon in March, gathered state agents from countries of the Central African Region. The second, in Tanzania in November with agents from the East Africa region. The objective of the workshops was to present and describe in detail policies, methods, tools, challenges

and opportunities in the artisanal and small-scale mining sector.

IPIS provided presentations on the formalization of ASM, and challenges around insecurity and conflict financing in the mining sector, topics on which IPIS wrote two chapters for PanAfGeo's handbooks on artisanal and small-scale mining for the Central and Eastern African regions.

▼ PanAfGeo 2 training in Douala.



The European Partnership for Responsible Minerals



MULTISTAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE

The European Partnership for Responsible Minerals (EPRM) is a multi-stakeholder partnership with industry, governments, and civil society, established to increase the demand for responsibly sourced tin, tungsten, tantalum, and gold (3TG) minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas and to create better social and economic conditions for mine workers and local mining communities.

The challenges around responsible sourcing of minerals arise within the context of the energy transition. The European Union (EU) has announced additional regulations, such as the Batteries Regulation — to make batteries sustainable throughout their entire life cycle — and the Critical Raw Materials Act — to ensure EU access to a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials. Consequently, it also prompts the EPRM to broaden its scope beyond the ‘conflict minerals’ regulation and 3TG.

Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Mineral Trade



MULTISTAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE

The Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade (PPA) is a multi-sector initiative between leaders in civil society, industry, and government that supports projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the surrounding Great Lakes Region that improve the due diligence and governance systems needed for ethical supply chains.

IPIS is an elected member of the Governance Committee as part of the civil society pillar, that provides input and advice to the Alliance concerning

the current political, economic, security, and on-the-ground realities in conflict-affected and high-risk areas of interest to the PPA. The civil society pillar participates in Alliance meetings to inform programmatic priorities, advise on the design of PPA activities and grant-making, review implementation and evaluate progress towards reaching the Alliance goals, and provide and analyze input from local communities to ensure projects are addressing their needs and not causing undue harm.

Empower civil society actors to ensure monitoring and enhance accountability

Kufatilia – Incident reporting and monitoring

Supported by USAID (P-DEC), the European Commission, the Belgian Development Cooperation and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Madini)

37 workshops dissemination workshops and 1,019 people reached (676 men, 343 women). Over 1,014 reported incidents.

Since 2018, members of mining communities, civil society actors, or any other informant in the eastern DRC can anonymously report mining-related incidents via Kufatilia. Information sent by text message after the keyword “Kufatilia” (“to track” in Swahili) is compiled on a platform. Based on the location of the incident, the Center of Expertise on Mining Governance of the University of Bukavu (CEGEMI), which administers the platform, assigns each incident to the relevant partner CSO. After the

fact-checking process, CSOs carry out actions in response to the incident. This can involve sensitization activities to inform local communities of their rights and duties under the mining code, safe practices, moderating discussions with mining companies cooperatives, or other actors, preventing dangerous forms of child labor, etc.

After a successful implementation in provinces where 3TG minerals are extracted, Kufatilia extended to the cobalt-producing province of Lualaba. Kufatilia is now a dynamic network strong of 22 CSOs. During a first annual meeting in November in Bukavu and Bunia, partners took stock of the progress, exchanged

▼ Kufatilia meeting in Bunia.



lessons learned, and decided to turn the existing collaborations into a Kufatilia Network.

To better equip the network, IPIS developed a new internal incident-follow-up platform. The platform enables CSOs to better pool, filter, correct, analyze, and monitor incoming incident data with the aim of facilitating follow-up.

To increase transparency over the mineral supply chain, reported incidents continue to be visible on the Kufatilia dashboard where stakeholders can check their location, date, category, and status.

Linked to Kufatilia, is the “Matokeo” price ping service, which offers actors in the mining sector the possibility to consult the daily price of gold, tin, or cobalt by sending the keyword “Matokeo” (‘results’ in Swahili) to one of the Kufatilia phone numbers. In 2023 this service has been used 793 times (gold 702 times, tin 21 and cobalt 70).

With: CEGEMI, Ulula, ACADOSHA, ACOSYF, ADDH, ADECO, AEMAPRI, AFEDECO, APDE, ASADHO, ASSODIP, CDJP, CENADEP, CPDH, CRESA, CRPRDH, FEAUTWA, FOMI, FSH, IBGDH, Justice Plus, Max Impact, OGP, RHA.

Project page



<https://ipisresearch.be/project/kufatilia-incident-reporting-and-monitoring/>

News posts



[Kufatilia is now active in the cobalt-producing province of Lualaba, in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#)



[Kufatilia evolves into a civil society network, now equipped with a new platform to follow up on mining incidents](#)

Voix du Congo - Congolese CSOs document challenges of responsible mineral sourcing

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

Through the Voix du Congo publication series, IPIS aims to amplify the experience and knowledge of DRC partners. IPIS provides editorial support to Congolese civil society organizations who wish to put down in writing some of their experiences in the ASM sector.

In 2023, Réseau Haki Na Amani (RHA) analyzed the role that the artisanal mining sector played in the demobilization and reintegration into society of the armed group Force de Résistance Patriotique de l’Ituri (FRPI), in the province of Ituri. The failure of a demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) program launched in 2020 has led FRPI fighters to informally return to civil life, finding work

in agriculture and fishing but also in the artisanal mining sector. Focusing on artisanal gold mining in the Bavi region, the study investigates how the involvement of former FPRI fighters in mining activities has affected local communities, their reintegration, and the gold sector in Ituri.

Publication



[Voix du Congo: The role of artisanal mining in the demobilisation and reintegration of former FPRI fighters in the chefferie de Walendu Bindi, Ituri](#)

Promoting civic space in Tanzania's extractive sector governance

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

Tanzania is endowed with significant mineral resources. Yet the contribution of the extractive sector to sustainable development is undermined by governance challenges, including a lack of transparency, accountability, and civic participation. With the support of the Belgian Development Cooperation, IPIS and HakiRasilimali, a network of Tanzanian Civil Society Organisations, engaged in a project to strengthen the role of civil society in dialogues and decision-making on extractives. The project aimed to enhance civic participation and representation, particularly for the numerous remote and geographically dispersed communities affected by extractive operations. Despite gradual improvements in civic space, challenges remain in Tanzania's extractive sector. While some government restrictions have eased, HakiRasilimali and other CSOs alike continue to navigate a cautious environment when addressing sensitive issues.

Throughout the project, IPIS and HakiRasilimali strengthened the network to engage in community-led advocacy in mining, oil, and gas governance. The HakiRasilimali network has grown organizationally, expanding its membership and enhancing its advocacy efforts from national to grassroots levels. Together,

IPIS and HakiRasilimali developed a membership strategy promoting the network's inclusivity and diversity to enrich discussions within the extractive sector.

In February, IPIS provided a training workshop on the design and execution of evidence-based studies on extractives and resource governance for HakiRasilimali staff and members. The network then launched its first research project on local content development in the Geita and Mara regions to feed its policy work. HakiRasilimali actively engaged with the government and parliamentarians through platforms such as the Extractive Sector Incubator (ESKI). Key messages from communities were brought to the national Jukwaa Conference, a dialogue space where civil society, academia, industry, and government discuss new and better laws and policies that encompass community needs.

[Project page](#)



<https://ipisresearch.be/project/promoting-civic-space-in-tanzanias-extractive-sector-governance/>



Engagement with the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition

Supported by the European Commission

IPIS is a member of the Civil Society Coalition (CSC) of the Kimberley Process (KP), a UN-mandated certification scheme designed to break the link between the diamond trade and conflict. Representing communities affected by diamond mining and trade, the KP CSC strives to improve diamond sector governance in various ways. It acts as a watchdog within the formal KP structures, monitors and documents human rights impacts along the diamond supply chain, supports and empowers communities affected by diamond mining, and advocates for change at national, regional, and international levels. As a member of the Coalition, an important objective of IPIS is to link grassroots research and advocacy to discussions about enhancing diamond governance in European and international policy fora.

The coalition brings evidence of human rights abuses, violence, and environmental impacts related to diamond mining to the core of the KP meetings. However, as the KP generally fails to act upon these challenges, the KP CSC increasingly seeks other fora to voice its concerns. In 2023, the KP Civil Society Coalition advocated for meaningful change in diamond governance at the Alternative Mining Indaba in Cape Town, at the OECD Forum for Responsible Mineral Supply Chains, and at the Inhorgenta Munich trade show. Together with the Japanese organization Diamonds for Peace, IPIS and the KP CSC also organized an event in Antwerp in June to discuss ways to better include artisanal miners for a more responsible diamond supply chain.



Analyzing the impact of unconditional cash transfers in an artisanal mining zone

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

In 2021, the non-profit organization Eight World launched an Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) pilot project in a village of an artisanal mining zone in the Congolese province of Maniema. For two years, inhabitants will receive monthly cash transfers (20 USD per adult and 10 USD per child) via a mobile money transfer system.

With a controlled study approach, IPIS assesses the effects of the intervention on the socio-economic well-being of beneficiaries. To do so, IPIS conducted a baseline to measure a broad range of indicators in the group of people receiving UCT and in a comparable group of people in a control village, two weeks before the start of the intervention. IPIS performed the same operation in a second village that started benefiting from the basic income project in 2022, and in a third one end 2023.

To measure change over time, IPIS will conduct follow-up surveys in these UCT villages and their control villages. Midline results for the pilot study were published in June 2023. After one year of cash transfers, substantial changes were observed in the UCT village (in comparison to the control village)

for several key indicators such as the variety of occupations, investment in professional equipment, quality of housing, food diets, and health perceptions. An endline survey evaluating the effects of UCT two years after the start of the intervention was conducted in the pilot village and its control village in September 2023. First results were presented at the Eight World event “Cash without conditions” in Brussels in December 2023.

Publication



[Unconditional Cash Transfers \(UCT\) in the DRC: Midline results of a pilot study in an artisanal mining zone in Maniema province](#)

Project page



<https://ipisresearch.be/project/analysing-the-impact-of-unconditional-cash-transfers-in-an-artisanal-mining-zone-in-maniema-province-drc/>



Improvement of the quality of housing in the UTC village.
©Rwothomio Kabandole (Eight).



BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS

Informing and monitoring responsible sourcing initiatives and drawing lessons learned

Implementation of the Blue Mine qualification status in eastern DRC

Supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mine site qualification and validation are a mandatory process in the DRC to legally extract minerals artisanally. However, the system has shown to be (too) slow and expensive therefore leaving thousands of artisanal mines in the DRC de facto illegal, even if their mining sites complied with all the criteria for a formal validation (green mine). To speed up the formalization of the ASM sector, the members of

the Madini kwa Amani na Maendeleo (Minerals for Peace and Development) project advocated for the creation of the blue mine status that was integrated into Congolese law through the Ministerial decree n°677 in November 2021. The blue status allows a registered mine site to exploit and export minerals while officially waiting for its qualification/validation

▼ Blue mines on IPIS' webmap of ASM sites in eastern DRC.

Qualification ministérielle

- Vert
- Jaune
- Rouge
- Bleu
- Aucune

Nombre de creuseurs

- Aucun / pas de données
- 1 à 50
- 50 à 500
- Plus que 500

Traitement de l'or au mercure (enregistré à partir de 2015)

- Traitement au mercure
- Pas de traitement au mercure
- Pas de données

Travail d'enfants de moins de 15 ans

- Pas de données
- Non
- Oui

Dépôt commercant des minerais

Zones d'ingérence

Destination des minerais

Points de vente des minerais

Barrières routières

Mine: Kachemba

Substance(s)	Or
PCode	codmine03473
Province	Sud-Kivu
Territoire	Fizi
Collectivité	
Groupement	
Village	
Longitude	28° 41' 51" E
Latitude	4° 48' 29,1" S
Origine	GPS
Qualification	Bleu (2023)

Information	
Substances	Or
Présence armée	
Services	
Farmes et enfants	
Incidents	

2023	
Project	Qualification status
Date de visite	15/03/2023
Substance(s)	Or
Qualification	Bleu

Project	IPIS - Madini
Date de visite	23/05/2023
Substance(s)	Or
Nombre de creuseurs	54

Info popup: Bleu : Depuis la signature de l'arrêté ministériel du Ministère des mines n°677 du 12 novembre 2021, le Gouvernement congolais reconnaît la qualification "bleu" telle qu'intégrée dans la deuxième version du Mécanisme Régional de Certification. Le statut bleu est demandé par un exportateur désireux de formaliser sa chaîne de production mais qui attend la visite d'une équipe conjointe de qualification. La demande officielle se fait après la remise aux autorités minières (locale, provinciale et nationale) d'un rapport d'évaluation sur les risques liés aux statuts jaune et rouge dans le site minier. Si endéans les 10 jours de la réception du rapport les services miniers ou le Comité Provincial de Suivi (CPS) n'ont identifié aucun risque lié aux statuts jaune ou rouge, les minerais peuvent être exploités et exportés. La qualification bleu est valable 3 ans, après quoi le site minier est automatiquement qualifié rouge.

status and puts the private sector back at the center of the due diligence of its supply chain.

To ensure that the standards incorporated into national legislation are rigorously applied, the Madini project supported a pilot experiment in the Province of South Kivu. A first step consisted of identifying, after a risk assessment, mining sites that could qualify for the blue mine status. Approved sites were then to be listed in the mining site register. On March 15, 2023, the Congolese Minister of Mines signed the first directory of blue mining sites, listing a total of 22 blue mining sites in the territories of Fizi, Kabare, Kalehe, Mwenga and Shabunda, in the province of South Kivu.

Madini started operationalizing the blue status at two of the blue mining sites in Fizi territory, in collaboration with an exporter, Society Artisanale

SARL (SA), and gold is expected to start being exported in the course of 2024.

IPIS worked hand in hand with its partners of the Madini project on the implementation of the blue mine status. IPIS engaged in the identification of potential blue mining sites and will be involved in their monitoring. In October, IPIS took part in a week of exchanges and feedback on the blue mines' status in Brussels, when policy recommendations were shared with key stakeholders.

Project page



ipisresearch.be/project/madini-strengthening-regional-stability-in-the-great-lakes/



Evaluating the impact of the European Conflict Mineral Regulation and drawing lessons learned

Supported by the European Commission

Since January 2021, the European Regulation on Conflict Minerals has obliged European companies to carry out due diligence checks on their suppliers up to the middle of the supply chain, to minimize and manage the risks of human rights abuse and to break the link between the exploitation of mineral resources and violent conflicts. The innovation lies in the fact that the Regulation makes the otherwise voluntary (OECD) Due Diligence Guidance mandatory for EU importers.

The implementation of the Regulation and its impact, particularly with regard to benefits for local communities and small-scale artisanal mining operators, were at the center of IPIS' work in 2023. Disappointingly, more than six years after the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation was signed into law, and almost three years after the requirements for EU importers started applying, an overall assessment conducted by IPIS and PAX shows that the Regulation has not achieved any notable impact along supply chains, let alone in producing countries. Member States' Competent Authorities (MSCAs) often lack the necessary sector expertise and capacity to ensure effective implementation. Secondly, EU importers often fail to operate adequate and complete supply

chain traceability systems, and to disclose relevant information, which has prevented transparency from increasing. This also means that heightened due diligence in the case of Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas (CAHRAs) or artisanal and small-scale mining has not been applied to date. IPIS details the high stakes and disappointing results of the Regulation in a paper and presented the results of the evaluation of the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation to the European Parliament in November 2023.

In the context of the negotiation of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), IPIS and Solidaridad explored the lessons learned from the European Regulation on Conflict Minerals and the US Dodd-Frank Act applying for 3TG to inform a better CSDDD. The analysis focused on the risk of disengagement. To avoid unintended negative consequences for vulnerable people in value chains, the EU must carefully design the CSDDD and clearly communicate this expectation to companies and implementing authorities. This includes finding the balance needed when it comes to the role of disengagement in due diligence.

Publications



[The EU Conflict Minerals Regulation: High stakes, disappointing results](#)



[Due diligence and the risk of disengagement: Experiences from the mineral sector and a way forward for the CSDDD](#)

Critical minerals: securing responsible EU supply for mutual benefits with producer countries

Supported by the European Commission

To mitigate climate change, countries are engaging in energy transitions to reduce fossil fuels in their energy sources. However, renewable energy technologies are resource-intensive and rely on various minerals. The International Energy Agency (IEA) expects demand for transition minerals to rise exponentially and countries made lists of “critical raw materials”. For the European Union, critical minerals are both of high importance to the EU economy and of high risk associated with their supply.

While civil society draws attention to human rights and environmental risks associated with the extraction of transition minerals, discourses on critical minerals are very centered on states’ ability to secure and diversify the supply of transition minerals. The European Union is actively developing strategic partnerships with producer countries and investing to counterweight China’s dominance in the renewable energy sector.

For IPIS, forging strategic partnerships harbors the potential for the EU to do business differently and for African producer countries to strengthen their demand for equal treatment. To ensure that strategic partnerships are also a “win” for vulnerable communities, the EU should invest in informing local communities of the impact of its regulations. During a field visit in Lualaba and Haut-Katanga in September, IPIS organized a two-day training in Kolwezi with its partner IBGDH on the EU Critical Raw Material Act and Battery Regulation to local civil society organizations and local mining authorities. Exchanges

showed that EU regulations are unknown at the local level, and therefore, not implemented.

On the 30th of November, IPIS hosted a panel discussion on current challenges facing the cobalt sector in the DRC and the potential impact of EU regulations to improve these. Moderated by Lotte Hoex, the panel included Guillaume de Brier (IPIS), Sarah Katz-Lavigne (IOB-University of Antwerp), and Espérant Mswishamali (Independent researcher on ASM). IPIS argued that current EU efforts to ensure high environmental and social governance (ESG) standards have centered on drafting policies, but these efforts have been eclipsed by the dominance of Chinese direct investment. A possible way forward for the EU could be through direct investment in the Congolese ASM cobalt sector. Doing so could improve the material conditions of miners and contribute to upholding human rights. As the Congolese cobalt LSM sector is currently running at maximum capacity, investment in ASM would provide EU industries with an alternative source of cobalt.

Beyond supply agreements, the Critical Raw Material (CRM) Act identifies three important avenues for a more independent raw material supply chain: extracting within the EU, increasing processing and refinery capacity within the EU, and recycling. However, no goals are set to reduce our mineral demand or to ensure that critical minerals are used in sectors that benefit the energy transition or contribute to the production of renewable energy. The EU should not solely focus its attention on

accommodating increased demand but also urgently develop an industrial plan with priorities.

To continue sharing insights on natural resource governance, IPIS joined the European Raw Materials Coalition in 2023. The platform, coordinated by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), gathers

60 European NGOs focusing on human rights and environmental protection. The Raw Materials Coalition's aim is to ensure that EU decision-makers design and deliver policy solutions for a transformed future, where EU consumption of raw materials safeguards people and the planet.

IPIS briefings



[Critical minerals and the need for equal partnerships with African producers](#)



[Chinese dominance in Zimbabwe's lithium mines: Potential risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities in the critical minerals sector](#)



[The EU Critical Raw Materials Act: Handshakes, extracting, processing and recycling. Why not reducing and prioritizing?](#)

News post



[IPIS Event: Securing a responsible cobalt supply chain: EU regulations facing the realities of the Congolese cobalt mining sector](#)



Diamond governance: the Kimberley Process and beyond

Zimbabwe and diamonds: from laggard to leader?

Supported by the European Commission

In 2023, Zimbabwe assumed the rotating chairmanship of the Kimberley Process. This nomination, announced in November 2021, surprised many diamond industry observers, as the controversy over Zimbabwe's Marange diamond fields was still fresh in peoples' minds. In 2009, Marange witnessed severe violence, including more than 200 killings, perpetrated by government forces, with reports of human rights abuses continuing in the following years.

An IPIS Insight provided historical context through a sequence of events since 2006, when diamond mining started in Marange. This aimed to understand how Zimbabwe and the KP seem to have reached a silent reconciliation. The paper also examined a range of other challenges facing the country's diamond sector, including socio-economic and environmental issues.



▲ Botswana 2022 and Zimbabwe 2023 KP Chairs.

Publication



[From laggard to leader? Zimbabwe's turbulent diamond history](#)

The Kimberley Process in deep crisis

Supported by the European Commission MULTISTAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE

As a member of the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition, IPIS attended both the KP intersessional and plenary sessions in Zimbabwe, witnessing the body's inability to discuss whether it could continue certifying Russian diamonds as conflict-free. At the end of the plenary meeting in November, the KP CSC walked out of nightlong negotiations on the final communique to express discontent with the nature and direction of discussions. One of the main stumbling blocks was how to address the role of diamonds in financing Russia's war against Ukraine. Since 2022, efforts to include this matter on the agenda of KP meetings have been blocked by a small

group of Participants. The Civil Society Coalition also deplored that other forms of violence, such as human and environmental rights violations associated with diamonds, were once again left unanswered at the expense of communities.

News post



[Kimberley Process in deep crisis: Listen to diamond-affected communities to bring it back in touch with reality](#)



◀ **KP CSC at the Kimberley Process Plenary meeting in Victoria Falls.**

Long-awaited EU sanctions on Russian diamonds, traceability, and the G7

Supported by the European Commission

Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered an unprecedented wave of economic sanctions aimed at crippling Russia's economy and depleting the resources of the Russian war chest. Among these measures is the push to ban Russian diamonds from Western markets. Russia is the world's largest diamond producer by volume, with over 90% of these



▲ **Jewelry shop in Antwerp.**

diamonds being produced by a single company, Alrosa, of which two-thirds are owned by Russian government entities. However, Belgium and the EU, with Antwerp, home to the world's largest diamond trading hub took considerable time to include diamonds in their sanction regimen. It wasn't until May 2023 that the EU committed to developing a strategy to restrict the trade in Russian diamonds based on a system of traceability requirements developed together with G7 countries, and independent of the Kimberley Process. In December 2023, G7 countries agreed to introduce a technology-based traceability initiative. Imports restrictions progressively entered into force from January 2024. Throughout the year, IPIS continued to provide analysis to diverse stakeholders, in policy discussions and in the media. In April, IPIS answered the questions of the Belgian Federal Parliament on sanctions against Russian diamonds and traceability challenges during a parliamentary hearing.

News post



[G7 targets Russian diamonds – Q&A](#)

Documenting the harms and benefits of natural resource extraction to promote accountability

Examining the challenges in securing access to remedy and restoring community relations after serious human rights abuse: the case of the Williamson diamond mine in Tanzania

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation and the European Commission

In 2023, IPIS conducted an investigation into the challenges surrounding access to remedy and the restoration of community relations following serious human rights abuses at the Williamson diamond mine in the Tanzanian province of Shinyanga. In 2021, Petra Diamonds, the mine's then majority owner, reached a multi-million-pound settlement following a claim filed in the UK High Court, involving 96 alleged Tanzanian victims of beatings, torture, illegal detention, indiscriminate shootings, sexual violence, and killings. Petra committed to compensating victims, initiating community development projects, and establishing a grievance mechanism to remedy additional harms.

IPIS conducted extensive field research, over 120 interviews with local residents, civil society representatives, and local authority actors, as well as engagements with key stakeholders, including Petra.

This research aimed to assess how the settlement is perceived by and impacts residents of villages adjacent to the Williamson mine. The overarching conclusion drawn is that Petra and Williamson Diamonds have taken important steps to come clean with the troubled past. However, the research revealed that further improvement in understanding and responding to the concerns and needs of local residents is necessary for effectively implementing the well-intended initiatives. IPIS formulated concrete recommendations to enhance community relations, minimize harm, and ensure access to effective remedy.

Publication



[Petra Diamonds' attempts to come clean with its tarnished past in Tanzania](#)

▶
Resident from Ng'wangh'olo village standing next to a containment structure for the mudslide released by the breach of the mine's tailing dam in November 2022.

Empowering Tanzanian communities and civil society to foster justice and human rights in natural resource governance

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation



▲ Woman crushing minerals in Tanzania.

In Tanzania, the country's natural resource wealth is considered a key driver of development. Despite this potential for "doing good", the narrow economic focus on resource governance in combination with reduced civic space and respect for human rights in the country tend to worsen the vulnerability of communities and fuel precarious human rights conditions. With the support of the Belgian Development Cooperation, IPIS and its partners aim to strengthen the documentation and reporting of human rights issues and socio-economic impact

related to natural resource governance and to increase justice seekers' access to remedy.

[Project page](#)



ipisresearch.be/project/empowering-tanzanian-communities-and-civil-society-to-foster-justice-human-rights-in-natural-resource-governance/



Voices from Tanzania

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

IPIS' "Voices from Tanzania" series features concise, evidence-based case studies by selected civil society organizations (CSOs) aiming at highlighting critical issues related to access to justice and human rights in the governance of extractive resources in Tanzania.

Selected Tanzanian CSOs took part in a training organized by IPIS in Arusha in May 2023. The workshop covered human rights-based research methodologies. Following the training, CSOs carried out field research in four regions in northern Tanzania (Tanga, Manyara, Mara and Shinyanga) and drafted reports for which IPIS provided editorial support.



This edition of the Voices from Tanzania focused on the impact of land acquisition practices in the extractive sector. Two case studies (by Kinnapa Development Programme and HakiArdhi) zoomed on the impact of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) on adjacent communities. Himiza Social Justice and Rafiki SDO concentrated on the social-economic impact of land acquisition practices by respectively, the Barrick North Mara and the Bulyanhulu gold mines.

Through the Voices from Tanzania, IPIS seeks to shed light on the experiences of communities affected by natural resource extraction, thereby amplifying their voices in the broader discourse on resource governance in Tanzania and around the world.

With: Kinnapa Development Programme, HakiArdhi, Himiza Social Justice, Rafiki SDO

[Webpage](#)



[Voices from Tanzania](#)

DARUBINI briefing

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

In collaboration with its partners Business and Human Rights Tanzania (BHRT), HakiRasilimali, and Avocats sans Frontières (ASF), IPIS launched "DARUBINI", a quarterly briefing on justice and human rights in natural resource governance in Tanzania. The briefing delves into the multifaceted challenges faced by Tanzania in ensuring responsible and transparent natural resource governance while safeguarding human rights.

By shedding light on these issues, partners aim to stimulate informed dialogue and inspire action around extractives in Tanzania. Some of the topics covered included the progress and challenges of the energy transition in Tanzania, local content policies in the country's mining sector, and access to remedy.

Briefings



[Tanzania and the energy transition: Potential, progress and challenges](#)



[Tanzania's mining policy on local content: Progress and associated challenges](#)



[Access to remedy and extractive industries: The challenges of legal aid providers in Tanzania](#)



CONFLICT MAPPING

Conflict-financing, armed interference, and sources of insecurity beyond the ‘conflict minerals’ paradigm

Supported by USAID

Violent conflicts and conflict financing in eastern DR Congo have changed dramatically over the past two decades. Yet, an over-simplified and incorrect narrative of (proxy) wars driven by ‘conflict minerals’ persists and continues to influence policy and donor interventions. In collaboration with USAID, IPIS mapped the variety of causes, drivers, and actors that together define the nature of the conflict in eastern Congo today. Based on a survey conducted between 2021-2023 on 829 active mining sites and different qualitative studies, IPIS provided an updated assessment of (artisanal and small-scale) mining, mineral supply chains, and their link to insecurity in the eastern DRC.

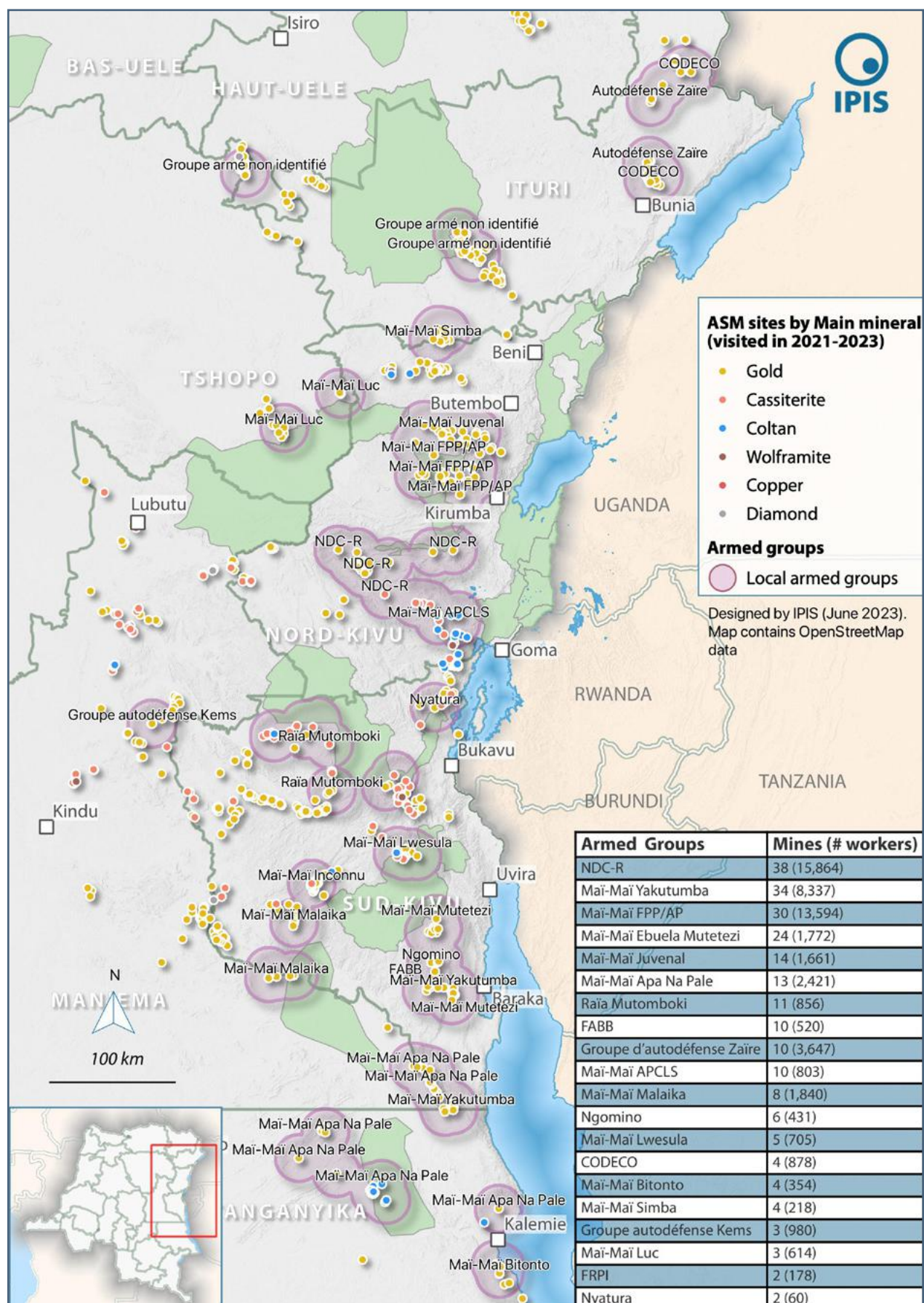
Mining in the eastern DRC is still heavily militarized, but resource-related conflicts are complex and multidimensional. Various other issues interact with natural resources, including access to land, intercommunity tensions and their historical roots, failing Disarmament Demobilization and Reinsertion (DDR) programs, and long-lasting governance issues.

A case study conducted in the territory of Djugu in Ituri showed that today’s armed conflict in the region is not caused by competition for control over gold mines, but rather results from tensions over customary land rights and access to land in general. Unaddressed historical grievances about social inequalities and land have contributed to long-lasting divisions between communities, which eventually deteriorated into inter-communal violence. However, gold increasingly

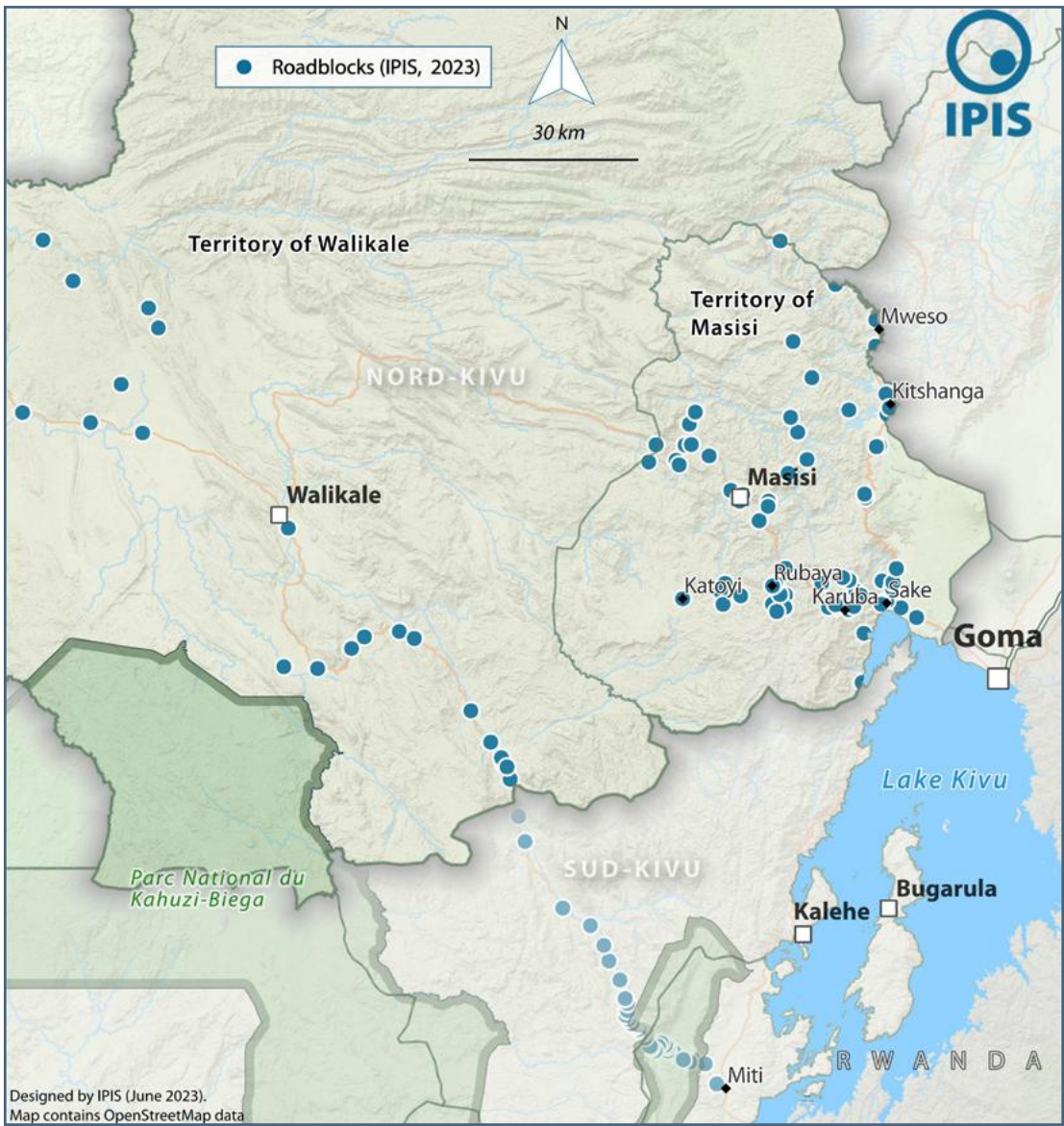
becomes an important asset in the survival strategies of local armed groups. As mining is intrinsically linked to land, the nexus between gold and conflict is therefore still inseparable from it. Imposing martial law in the province of Ituri did not restore peace and stability. To build sustainable peace the government will need to deal fundamentally with the issues underlying people’s grievances.

Beyond minerals, armed actors also rely on other sources of revenue to finance their struggles. Among these are the operation of roadblocks. A study on 110 checkpoints in the territories of Masisi and Walikale in North Kivu analyzed the link between roadblocks and mineral trade. Half of all roadblocks mapped taxed minerals or mineral traders, while one out of six roadblocks surveyed were established solely to tax ASM or mineral trading. However, roadblocks also taxed agricultural and market goods which shows that minerals are not the sole commodity in conflict-financing patterns. Moreover, roadblocks have a critical impact including the restriction of the freedom of movement of the local population and mixed effects on security, between the threat of violence during controls, and a greater perception of security among locals.

IPIS also developed an interactive storymap, to provide a brief summary of its findings on the linkage between mining and conflict-financing in the eastern DRC.



▲ Map of armed groups interfering at ASM sites, 2021-2023 (829 sites).



▲ Roadblocks in Masisi and Walikale, 2023.

Publications

→ [Armed groups, territorial control, land disputes, and gold exploitation in Djugu, Ituri, Democratic Republic of Congo.](#)

→ [Roadblocks in Masisi and Walikale: Predation on movement in turbulent times](#)

Project page

→ ipisresearch.be/project/understanding-artisanal-mining-supply-chains-and-conflict-financing-in-drc/

Providing context on the M23 crisis in eastern DRC

Supported by the European Commission

The resurgence of the March 23 Movement (M23) has led to possibly the worst humanitarian crisis in eastern Congo in the last decade. On the one hand, it shows that the regional dimension remains important to understand conflict dynamics in eastern DRC: regional trade of commodities – including minerals – gives rise to geopolitical tensions, neighboring countries continuing to support armed groups across

the border, etc. On the other hand, the M23 crisis also reveals the complexity of the conflict in eastern DRC, as both regional tensions and local inter-community tensions over access to land are at stake. The crisis also involves an increasing number of armed actors, making the situation more unpredictable, and threatening long-term stability.



Two IPIS briefings analyzed the resurgence of M23. The first one examined the reasons behind M23's sudden revival, the impact on military alliances on the ground, its link with regional rivalries, and increasing ethnic tensions. The second briefing examined the reasons for the revival of fighting in late 2023, after a six-month lull in fighting, the multiplication of armed actors, and the link with the electoral process in DRC.

Briefings



[Why M23 is not your average rebel group](#)



[M23 crisis flares again in North Kivu: context, dynamics and risks](#)

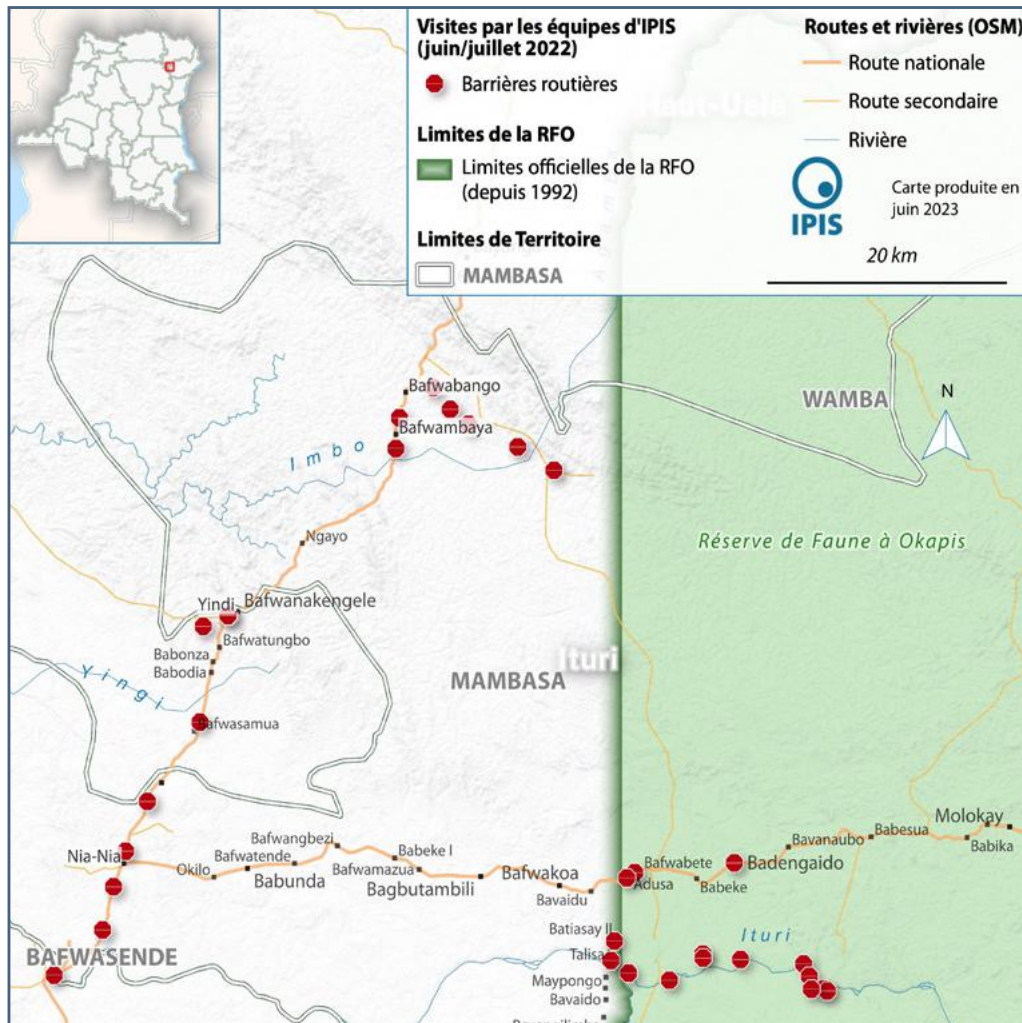
◀ **Map of the Masisi, Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territories in the Province of North Kivu.**

Analyzing the militarization of mining activities near the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in eastern DRC

Supported by USAID

Establishing a protected area can be a source of tension with the area's inhabitants but also with local populations who seek to use land in the zone for agriculture or mining purposes. For conservation purposes, mining activities are prohibited in protected areas such as the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in the province of Ituri. However, rich gold deposits present

in the area attract both artisanal miners seeking livelihoods and semi-industrial operators. Tujenge, the Partnership for the Development of Eastern DRC (P-DEC) aims to identify and address the root causes of conflicts and promote sustainable economic alternatives to armed violence. For Tujenge, IPIS mapped stakeholders and analyzed conflict motives



Location of roadblocks visited by IPIS in June and July 2022 near the Okapi Wildlife Reserve.

in the region of Nia-Nia, a trading center close to the Okapi Wildlife Reserve (OWR).

Despite the expulsion of various armed groups over the past few years, a climate of insecurity persists in Mambasa due to undisciplined FARDC forces being contracted as security for privately-owned mining concessions that exist next to or in the OWR. Firstly, undisciplined FARDC elements are paid by foreign semi-industrial miners to ensure the security of their personnel and to monitor the zones they control. Secondly, a new map of the Reserve published by the Congolese Mining Cadastre (CAMI) (but not approved by the Congolese Government) caused tensions. Shrinking the size of the Reserve

and therefore, changing its boundaries, it has set individuals against each other: agents of the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) in charge of protecting the reserve against artisanal miners, semi-industrial Chinese miners, and the local population which wants to exploit the area's natural resources.

Publication



[Mapping of artisanal mining sites in western Mambasa, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

Mapping conflicts in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

In the framework of its program supported by the Belgium Development Cooperation, IPIS launched a collaboration with partner civil society organizations - ACADHOSHA in South Kivu, ASSODIP in North Kivu, and RHA in Ituri - to map conflicts in the respective regions. Following a first baseline assessment of conflicts in each province, selected conflicts were/are studied through field research. The field research of the three CSO partners is scientifically supported by CEGEMI and IPIS.

In Ituri, RHA has focused, in its first study, on an emerging conflict between the artisanal mining cooperative Ngayo Congo and the gold mining company Kamkis Mining, on conflicts over geographic limits between mining concessions, and on tensions caused by gold extraction activities of Chinese miners, in the Ngayo groupement, in the territory of Mambasa. In Nord-Kivu, ASSODIP has studied the role of customary authorities in conflicts linked to the exploitation of natural resources in Rubaya, in the territory of Masisi.

Mapping the political economy of checkpoints in Somalia

Supported by the Rift Valley Institute

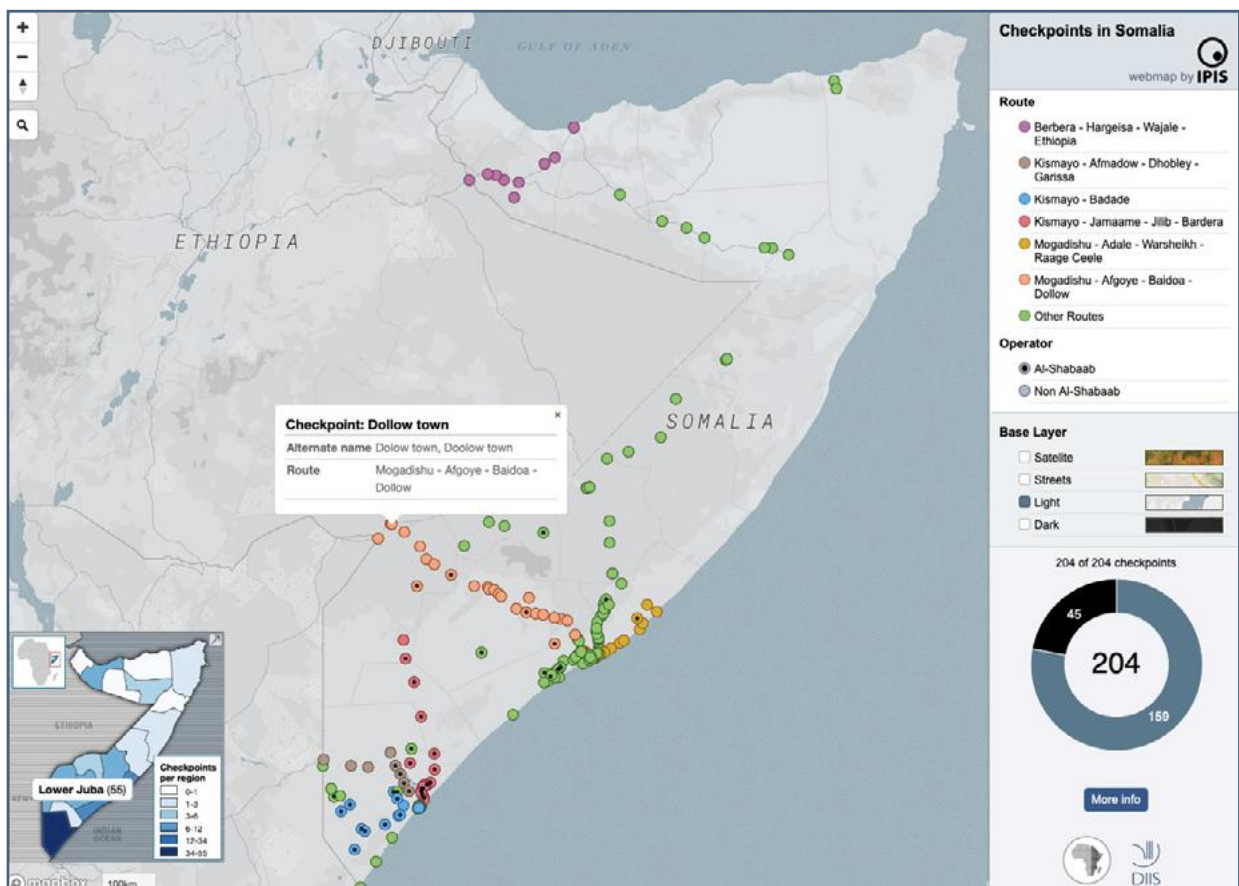
In 2023, IPIS contributed to ‘Paying the Price: The Political Economy of Checkpoints in Somalia’, a project by the Rift Valley Institute (RVI), the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), and XCEPT. IPIS provided advice in the data collection process and contributed to the data visualization through various static maps and the design of an interactive webmap. The maps inform users on the locations of roadblocks across Somalia, the distribution of violence at checkpoints as well as the density of checkpoints per administrative region.

They also identify varying characteristics of the roadblocks, including their operator, location on a primary/secondary road, and the amount paid at the checkpoint as toll.

Maps



[Mapping the political economy of checkpoints in Somalia](#)



▲ Webmap of checkpoints in Somalia.

Sahel

In 2023, the Sahel region experienced significant political, security, and humanitarian changes that further complicated the challenges in this already volatile area. The most notable political event was the coup in Niger on July 26, 2023, which overthrew President Mohamed Bazoum. This coup was part of a broader trend of political instability in the region, with anti-Western sentiment playing a significant role in the narratives surrounding these events. The security situation deteriorated further with an increase in violence involving various armed groups, and the humanitarian situation worsened due to ongoing conflicts, climate change, and economic challenges. During 2023, we witnessed the breakup of the institutional framework of the G5 countries. This would further lead to Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso leaving the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in early 2024.

Against this background, IPIS has been preparing research activities to tackle conflict drivers in the region of the Sahel and West-Africa and published a briefing on the challenges Western policymakers and aid donors were facing in this difficult context. Preparations would lead to a first mission to Benin in 2024, with a focus on energy corridors and transhumance.

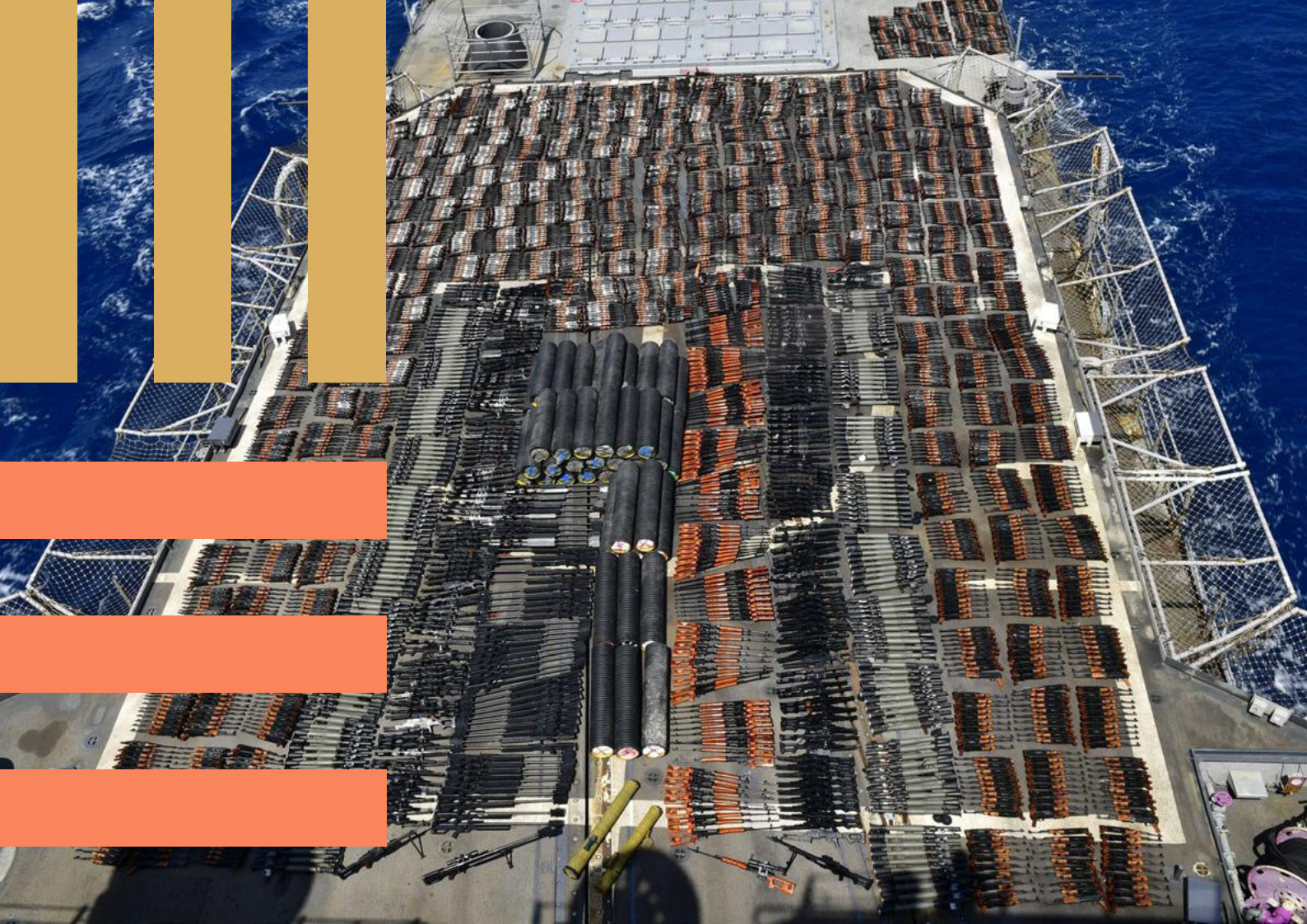
Briefing



[Reimagining Western engagement: New strategies for stability in the Sahel are underway](#)

- ▼ Convoy of Operation Barkhane near the border with Niger. ©ADJ Anthony Thomas Trophime, Armée de Terre française.





ARMS TRADE & SECURITY

Research on arms transfers and due diligence of arms trading companies

Arms transfers to Ukraine and their impact on the conflict

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

Following the escalation of the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, NATO and European countries have repeatedly promised military aid packages to the Ukrainian government. In 2022, IPIS examined the legal foundations of arms transfers to Ukraine in the framework of International Humanitarian Law.

While reluctant to supply sophisticated weapons to Ukraine in the first phase of the war, because of the danger of diversion and to avoid a further escalation of the conflict, NATO countries progressively pledged to deliver more offensive military hardware such as missiles and tanks. On the one-year commemoration of the invasion, Ukrainian president Volodymyr

Zelensky was lobbying NATO countries for fighter jets referred to as the 'wings for freedom'. An IPIS Arms Trade Bulletin discussed the need to have a long-term vision on the outcome of the war, balancing the objective of a complete recapture of all Ukrainian territory within its post-Soviet borders, and the room left for a negotiated solution.

After the controversy of deliveries of depleted uranium ammunition to Ukraine, IPIS also wrote a piece on the environmental cost of the war in Ukraine and introduced the discussion on ecocide, i.e. "the mass damage and destruction of the natural living world", and its integration in the international legal framework.



Briefings



[Where would Ukraine's "wings for freedom" be flying to?](#)



[The Ukraine war, environmental destruction and the question of ecocide](#)

◀ **Abandoned Battle Tank. Bucha, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine © Mikhail Volkov.**

Arms transfers to Israel in light of the crisis in Gaza

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

In the backdrop of the Gaza crisis, which started in October, the provision of arms to Israel has been a focal point of international scrutiny and debate. The influx of arms has been criticized by various human rights organizations and international bodies, which argue that these weapons contribute to the escalation of violence and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The conflict has resulted in extensive civilian casualties and widespread destruction, raising ethical concerns about the implications of arms sales and military assistance in conflict zones.

Together with its partner Vredesactie, IPIS is looking into the existing policies and loopholes in legal frameworks and administrative practices on federal and regional levels, to prevent that arms and ammunition exported from Belgium contribute to violations of human rights and humanitarian law. A report is upcoming in early 2024.



▲ Photo shared by Ministry of Defence of Israel (@Israel_MOD) on X (Twitter), 11 October 2023.

Assessing transparency mechanisms to improve arms trade scrutiny

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

Arms export licensing procedures are often shrouded in secrecy and the exchange of information is limited to the exporting companies and/or individuals and the competent licensing authority. In collaboration with Vredesactie, IPIS is working on the issue of transparency in the arms trade. The objective is to enable increased scrutiny by civil society, researchers, and the general public, but also to allow effective legal challenge of arms export decisions. With the financial support of the Belgian Development Cooperation, this project will cross-examine best practices in different countries such as the use of arms export reports, public registers, parliamentary inquiries, or freedom of information acts.

A report published in early 2023 highlights the need for a human rights perspective on arms export licensing and access to information.

Publication



[A human rights perspective on arms export licencing and access to information](#)

Project page



ipisresearch.be/project/assessing-transparency-mechanisms-to-improve-arms-trade-scrutiny/

Image page 39 - North Arabian Sea (May 8, 2021)
Thousands of illicit weapons interdicted by guided-missile cruiser USS Monterey. (U.S. Navy Photo).

Due diligence in the arms trade sector

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

Because arms transfers are closely linked to the states' geopolitical interests and defense policy objectives, they are highly regulated and subjected to a strict export licensing process. States must ensure that these licenses are only granted after conducting an impact assessment of the activities involved and as a result, corporate accountability has somehow gone unnoticed. Today, however, the debate also focuses on the companies' duty of care in the sector as compliance with export license requirements does not discharge companies of their responsibility to respect human rights and humanitarian law.

Building on IPIS' expertise in due diligence in the mineral sector, IPIS launched a wide research project on the possibility and necessity of establishing corporate responsibility and accountability for companies active in the arms value chain. A comprehensive overview will be published in 2024.

As a first output of this research, IPIS and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) published a fact sheet detailing how existing guidelines for responsible business conduct for States and companies to prevent, address, and remedy human rights abuses committed in business operations, apply to businesses that manufacture and trade small arms and light weapons.

In line with the research project, IPIS researchers also took part in a roundtable discussion organized by the Flemish Peace Institute in June: "Due diligence in defense sector: lessons learned from the diamond and mineral trade".

Factsheet



[Due diligence responsibilities of businesses involved in small arms and light weapons](#)



Policy advice on small arms and light weapons (SALW) controls

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation

In partnership with the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), IPIS contributes to advocacy and campaign activities in an effort to improve small arms and light weapons (SALW) controls and reduce

gun violence. IANSA and IPIS produce thematic briefing papers to inform and coordinate advocacy by the IANSA members.

Participating in the dialogue between Belgian peace organizations to promote conflict-sensitive policies

Belgian Peace network

Supported by the Belgian Development Cooperation ◀ NETWORK | PARTICIPATION

The Belgian Peace Network is an informal network where Belgian-based peace organizations and research institutes with a focus on peace exchange ideas and seek alignment to bring a peace-oriented perspective to present debates in Belgium. In

November, together with members of prominent Belgian peace organizations, IPIS and Search for Common Ground organized a policy dialogue with the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to exchange views on the war in Ukraine.

Flemish Peace Institute

◀ NETWORK | PARTICIPATION

The Flemish Peace Institute was established by the Flemish Parliament in 2004 to contribute to peace and violence prevention in our own society and in the rest of the world through research, advice and information activities. The director of IPIS was elected to the Board of Directors since 2013 and holds the office of vice chairman from 2020 to 2025. In this capacity, he also represents the Board in the Scientific Council which supervises the research activities of the Scientific Secretariat.

The Board is conceived as a multistakeholder platform where representatives of the Flemish political parties, civil society, industry and academia interact to formulate policy advice based on the Institute's research reports. IPIS is particularly vested in the domains of arms export controls and peace-oriented foreign policy. IPIS contributes to the discussions drawing from its own thematic expertise and broad experience with international multistakeholder platforms.



MAPS & DATA

IPIS designs interactive and static maps as an integrated part of its research methodology and upon external requests.

ipisresearch.be/home/maps-data/

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Mapping artisanal mining areas and mineral supply chains in eastern DRC

Supported by USAID (P-DEC) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

IPIS continuously collects primary data about the interference of armed groups in mining, the types of minerals mined, mineral pricing, mine worker demographics, trade routes, and environmental issues in eastern DRC.

IPIS developed several tools that provide observers, suppliers, and policymakers easy access to its data, to improve their understanding of challenges and opportunities along artisanal mineral supply chains. With IPIS' interactive [webmap](#) and open [data dashboard](#), users can visualize the data IPIS collected at over 2,876 artisanal mining sites in eastern DRC.

In 2023, IPIS published updated data on 331 mining sites, of which 141 were visited for the first time. In 2023, IPIS added on its web map 14 artisanal mines that were granted the qualification status of "Blue Mines". IPIS developed an interactive story map, to provide a brief summary of its findings on the linkage between mining and conflict-financing in the eastern DRC.

Webmap



ipisresearch.be/home/maps-data/maps-of-drc/interactive-map-of-artisanal-and-small-scale-mining-exploitation-in-eastern-drc/

Open data dashboard



ipisresearch.be/home/maps-data/maps-of-drc/open-data-dashboard-on-artisanal-and-small-scale-mining-in-eastern-drc/

Story map

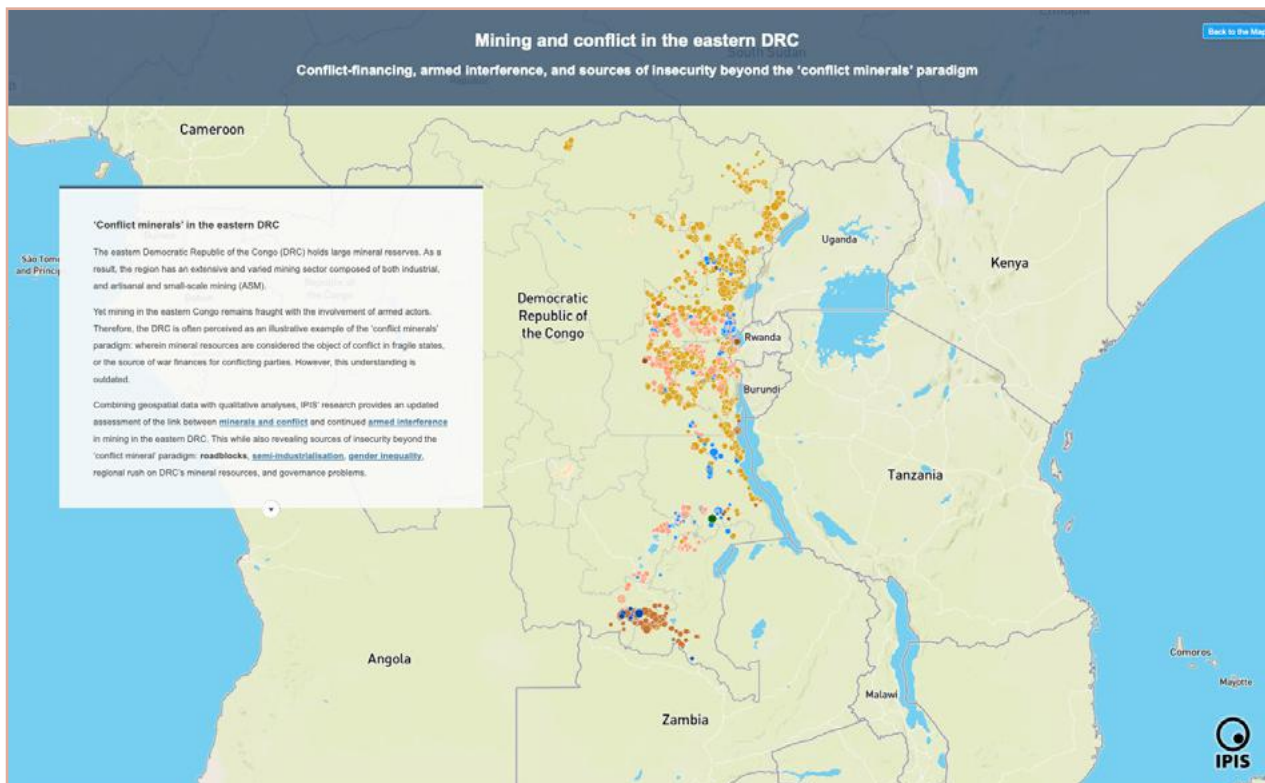


[Conflict-financing, armed interference, and sources of insecurity beyond the 'conflict minerals' paradigm](#)

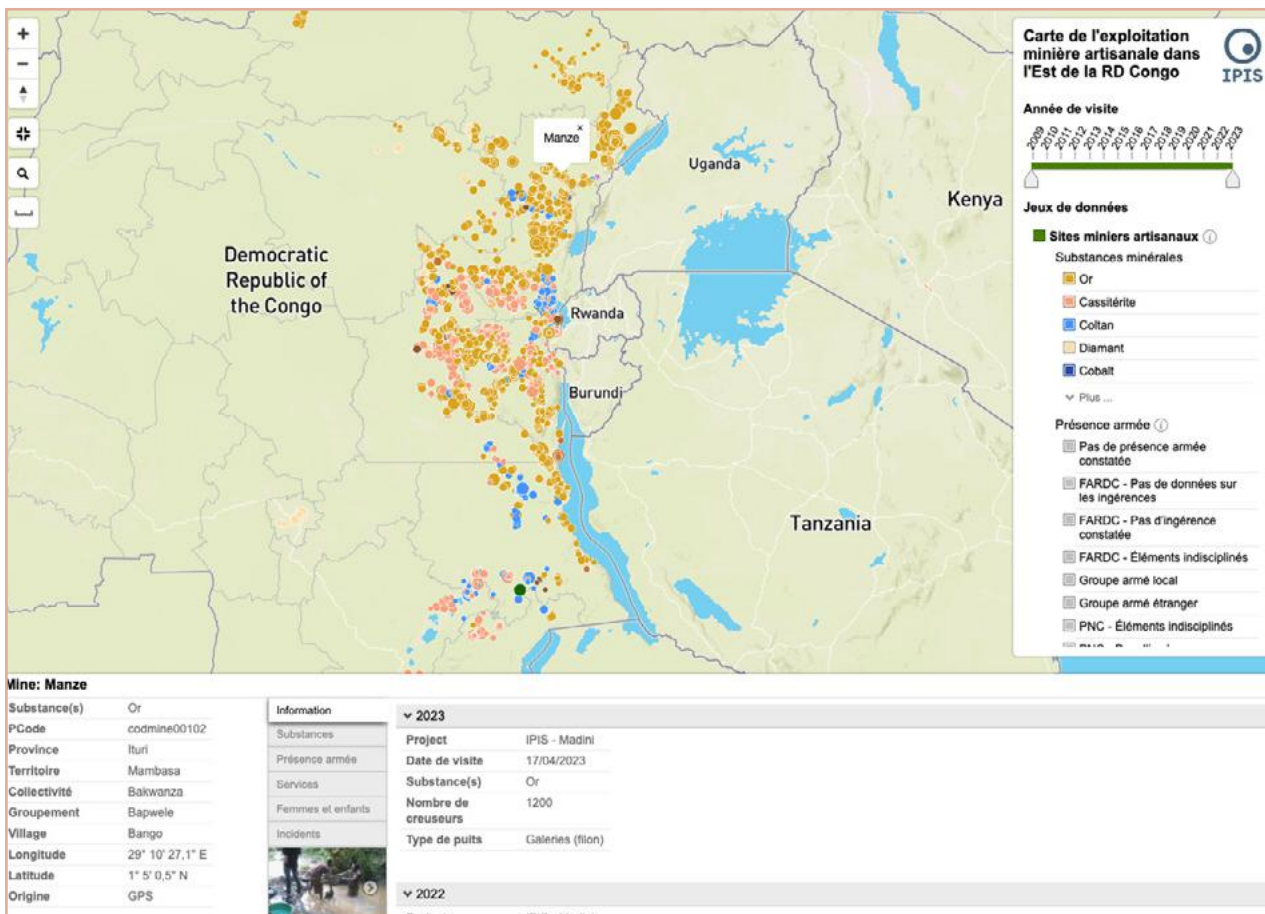
▼ Cassiterite and gold mining site, Kailo, Maniema.



▼ Story map on the linkage between mining and conflict-financing in eastern DRC.



▼ Interactive map of artisanal and small-scale mining sites in eastern DRC.





Kufatilia – A new internal platform for CSOs to follow up on reported incidents

Supported by USAID (P-DEC), the European Commission, the Belgian Development Cooperation, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Since 2018, artisanal miners in eastern DR Congo have been able to report incidents related to the production, transport, and trade of minerals through a free and anonymous text message-based platform developed by IPIS in collaboration with Ulula.

To enable a more collaborative follow-up of incidents, IPIS developed a new internal platform for Kufatilia members with additional functionalities. CSOs can now better pool, filter, correct, analyze, and monitor incoming incident data. Allowing a clear separation of responsibilities between the many parties involved, the updated Kufatilia platform provides a structured

interface for the follow-up process. The platform will thus contribute to exchanges and collaboration within the Kufatilia network.

Additionally, new processes will allow IPIS to directly link the submitted incidents with the mining sites in its database. This additional data source of periodic updates on the safety and security situation in the mines concerned will soon be integrated into our [DRC webmap](#). Incident details remain available on the [Kufatilia public dashboard](#), where stakeholders can check their location, date, category, and status.

Report ID	Date	Title	Status	Category	Province
6c3908f1	2023/12/29	Violence or theft	Résolu	Corruption or fraud	Rut
8a26e4f1	2024/01/04	Violence or theft	Résolu	Accident	Sud-Kivu
d4720276	2024/03/05	Violence or theft	Résolu	Violence or theft	Sud-Kivu
09ee7ab6	2023/09/11	Violence or theft	Persistent	Roadblock	Rut
0f82820f	2023/10/12	Violence or theft	Persistent	Child labor	Rut
e35878a0	2023/12/21	Violence or theft	Résolu	Accident	Rut
b433ae3a	2024/01/09	Violence or theft	Persistent	Environmental issue	Rut
42022300	2023/05/12	Violence or theft	Persistent	Environmental issue	Rut
8a075c5f	2023/07/16	Violence or theft	Résolu	Violence or theft	Rut
3b2b78ea	2024/01/09	Violence or theft	Résolu	Accident	Rut
4929e4b4	2023/01/30	Violence or theft	Résolu	Accident	Rut
7233e0e6	2023/02/11	Violence or theft	Non résolu	Accident	Rut
ce352793	2023/02/26	Violence or theft	Non résolu	Accident	Rut
cf38e6f3	2023/02/29	Violence or theft	Résolu	Accident	Rut
0f32e349	2024/01/19	Violence or theft	Résolu	Accident	Rut
3886e576	2024/01/16	Violence or theft	Persistent	Accident	Rut
76242325	2024/03/23	Violence or theft	Résolu	Accident	Sud-Kivu
3e0f9435	2024/01/23	Violence or theft	Résolu	Corruption or fraud	Sud-Kivu
0794d300	2024/01/23	Violence or theft	Résolu	Violence or theft	Sud-Kivu
68ee77c3	2024/01/23	Violence or theft	Résolu	Violence or theft	Sud-Kivu
4319a8f3	2024/01/23	Begare autour de contrôle et de l'accès d'un site minier	Résolu	Violence or theft	Sud-Kivu
802975c	2024/02/04	Violence or theft	Persistent	Violence or theft	Nord-Kivu
447284ef	2024/02/04	Violence or theft	Persistent	Child labor	Rut
574925d4	2024/02/27	Violence or theft	Résolu	Violence or theft	Lualaba
80e1750c	2024/03/25	Violence or theft	Résolu	Violence or theft	Rut
04c0f809	2024/04/26	Violence or theft	Non résolu	Violence or theft	Sud-Kivu
42000	2024/05/31	Violence or theft	Non résolu	Industrial conflict	Nord-Kivu
43000	2024/05/31	Violence or theft	Non résolu	Other	Nord-Kivu
43955	2024/05/29	Violence or theft	Non résolu	Corruption or fraud	Nord-Kivu
43031	2024/05/27	Violence or theft	Résolu	Corruption or fraud	Sud-Kivu
43855	2024/05/20	Violence or theft	Persistent	Violence or theft	Rut
43959	2024/05/20	Violence or theft	Persistent	Violence or theft	Rut
43838	2024/05/16	Violence or theft	Résolu	Violence or theft	Rut
43807	2024/05/16	Violence or theft	Résolu	Violence or theft	Rut
43804	2024/05/15	Roadblock	Persistent	Roadblock	Rut
43803	2024/05/15	Violence or theft	Persistent	Violence or theft	Rut
43802	2024/05/15	Violence or theft	Persistent	Violence or theft	Rut

◀ Kufatilia internal platform.

Building a sampling frame of cobalt artisanal mining sites to allow the creation of sample(s) representative of the mining sector in the Congolese provinces of Haut-Katanga and Lualaba

In 2023, the International Labor Organization (ILO) commissioned IPIS to create a sampling frame to be able to study the characteristics of the cobalt/copper mining sector in the provinces of Haut-Katanga and Lualaba. IPIS collated data from different sources to obtain a comprehensive geospatial dataset of mining sites in the provinces of Lualaba and Haut-Katanga and created an additional settlement dataset of cities, towns, and villages in the vicinity of cobalt/copper mining activities. Drawing upon the mining sites and

settlement datasets, IPIS generated a community dataset that can be used as a sampling frame to facilitate the creation of sample(s), representative of the cobalt/copper mining sector of Lualaba and Haut-Katanga. ILO can use this sampling frame as a basis for future representative studies on characteristics of the mining sector in both Congolese mining provinces.



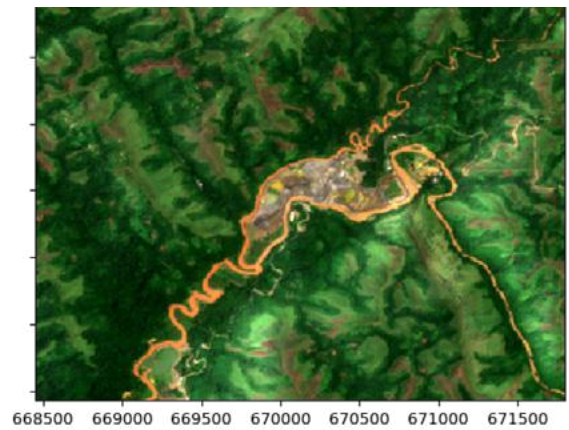
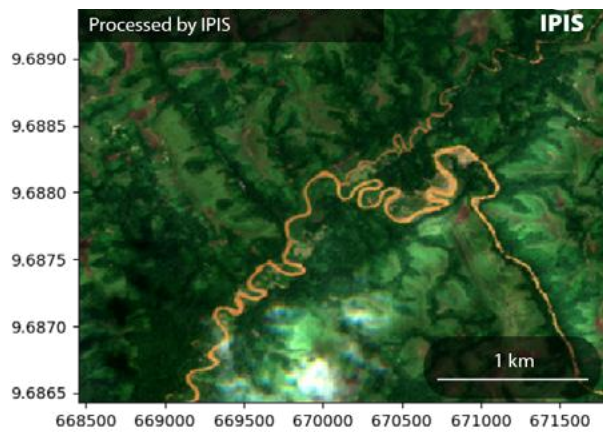
◀ Satellite view of the Kinsevere copper and cobalt mine. (Source: ESRI, Maxar (Vivid), July 2021).

Use of diverse analytical tools

Monitoring the evolution of semi-industrial exploitations

Using remote sensing technologies, IPIS investigated environmental changes associated with mining activities. Processing satellite images, IPIS studied human activities and land-cover, land-use changes

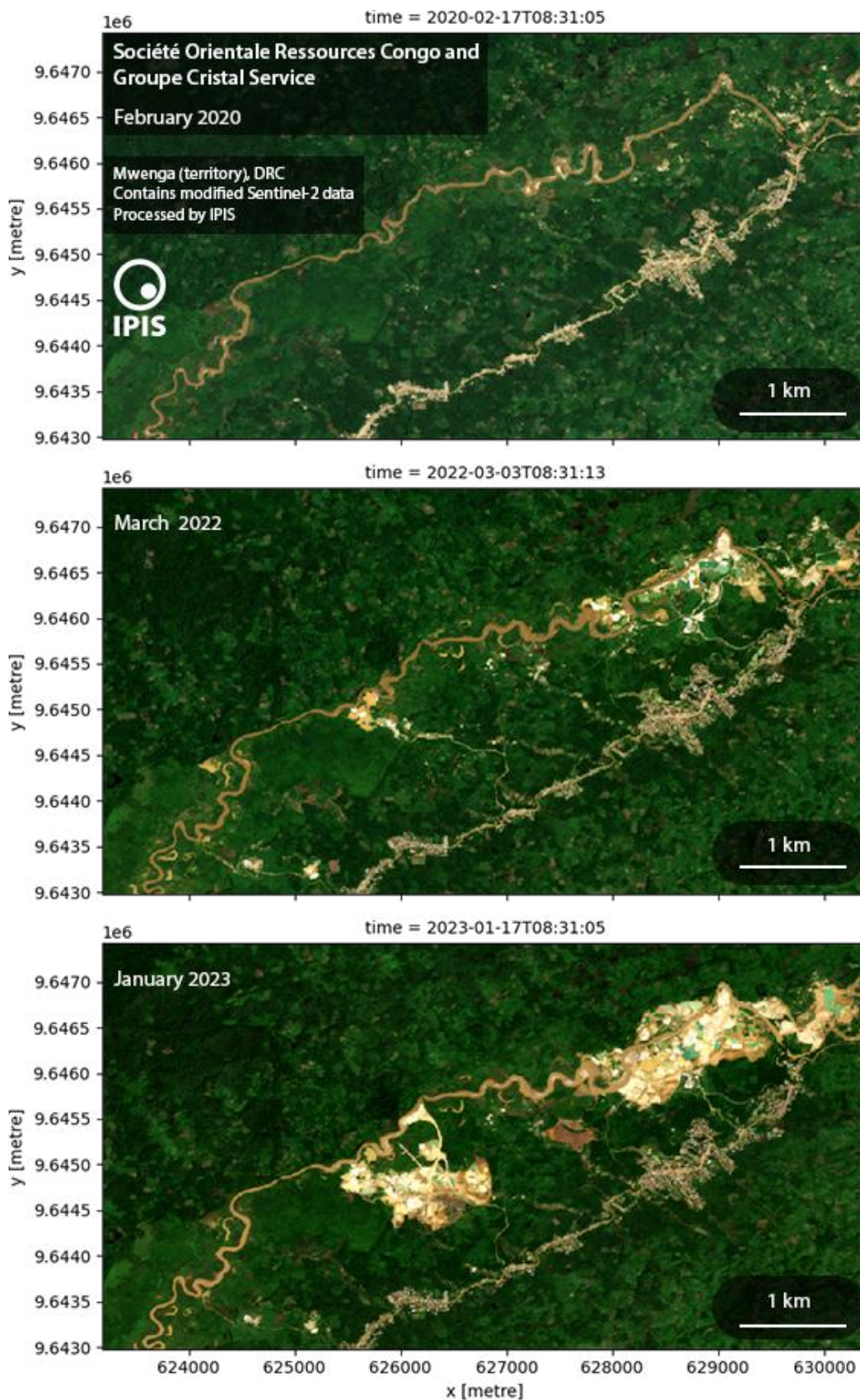
to better capture the development of semi-industrial exploitations of gold in eastern DRC and the issues they raise.



▲ Satellite image illustrating how the company Yellow Water Ressources diverted the river Lwindi. Contains modified Sentinel-2 data. Processed by IPIS.

Excavator loading a truck with mineral ore, Nyunzu territory (Tanganyika), September 2022.





▲ Satellite image showing the location and impact over time, February 2020 to January 2023, of the presence of the enterprises Société Orientale Ressources Congo SARL (ORC) and Groupe Cristal Service.

Visualizing the impact of a tailing dam breach in Tanzania

Tailings dam failures have become a recurring phenomenon over the last decade. In November 2022, a section of a wall of the Williamson diamond mine tailings storage facility was breached, releasing a stream of tailings slurry onto the surrounding area. Tailings can be a dangerous source of toxic chemicals

such as heavy metals, sulfides, and radioactive content. The analysis of satellite images allowed IPIS to map the geographical extent of the tailings-rich mudslide emanating from the Williamson mine, in relation to the location of local freshwater sources.

- ▼ **Flooded ASM site after the tailing dam breach near the Williamson diamond mine.**





Planet satellite images of the 7 November 2022 tailings dam breach at the Williamson mine. The situation on the day before (a) and the day after (b) the dam breach.

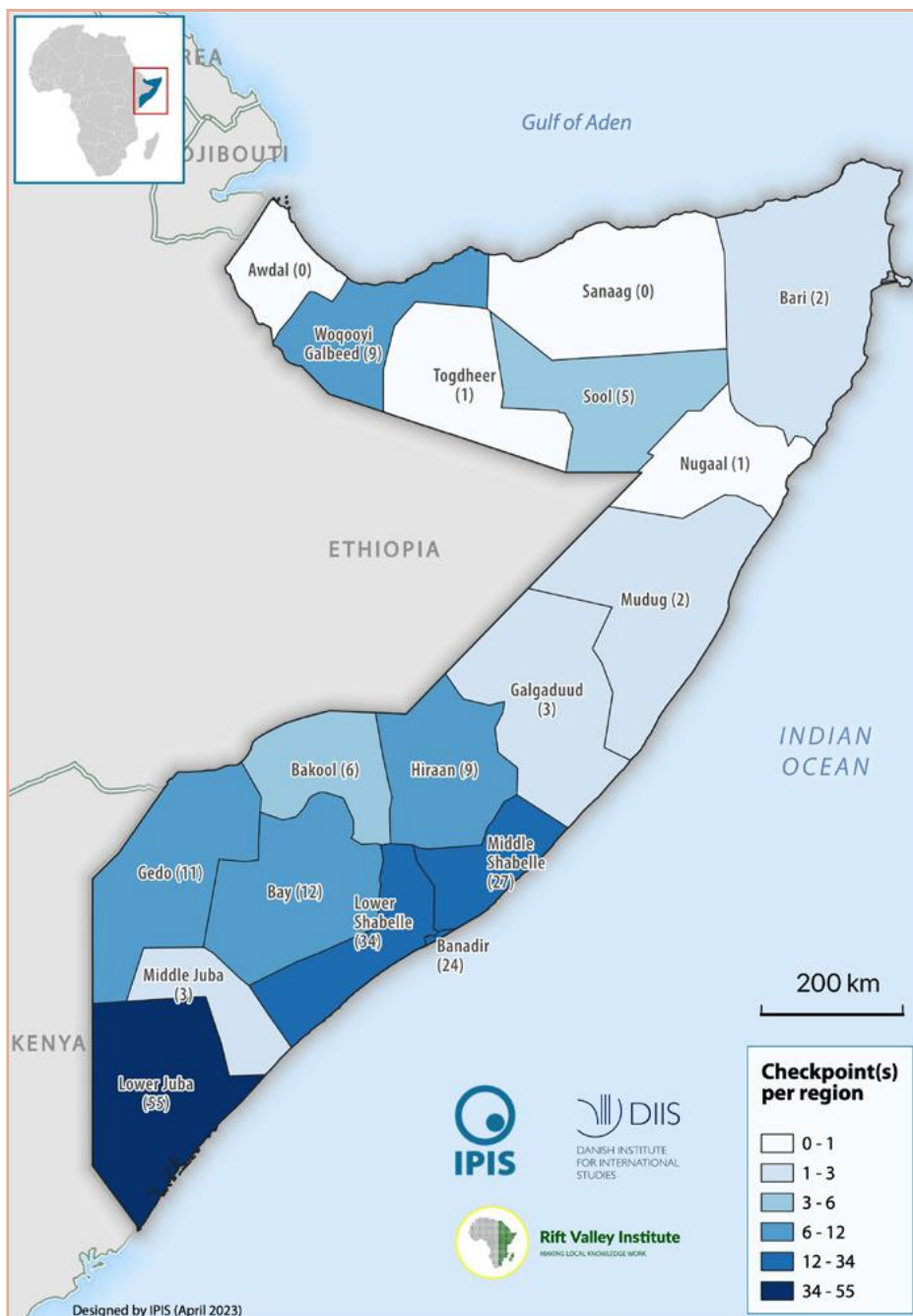
LEGEND

- 1 Tailings Dam
- 2 New Alamasí Dam
- 3 Zoom in Area
- Flooded Area
- Mine Concession
- Dam
- Containment Wall
- Village Center

Processing and visualizing data on roadblocks in Somalia

In 2023, IPIS provided advice on data collection and data visualization services to the Rift Valley Institute. The outcomes of the collaboration were several

static maps and an interactive web map of registered checkpoints in Somalia.



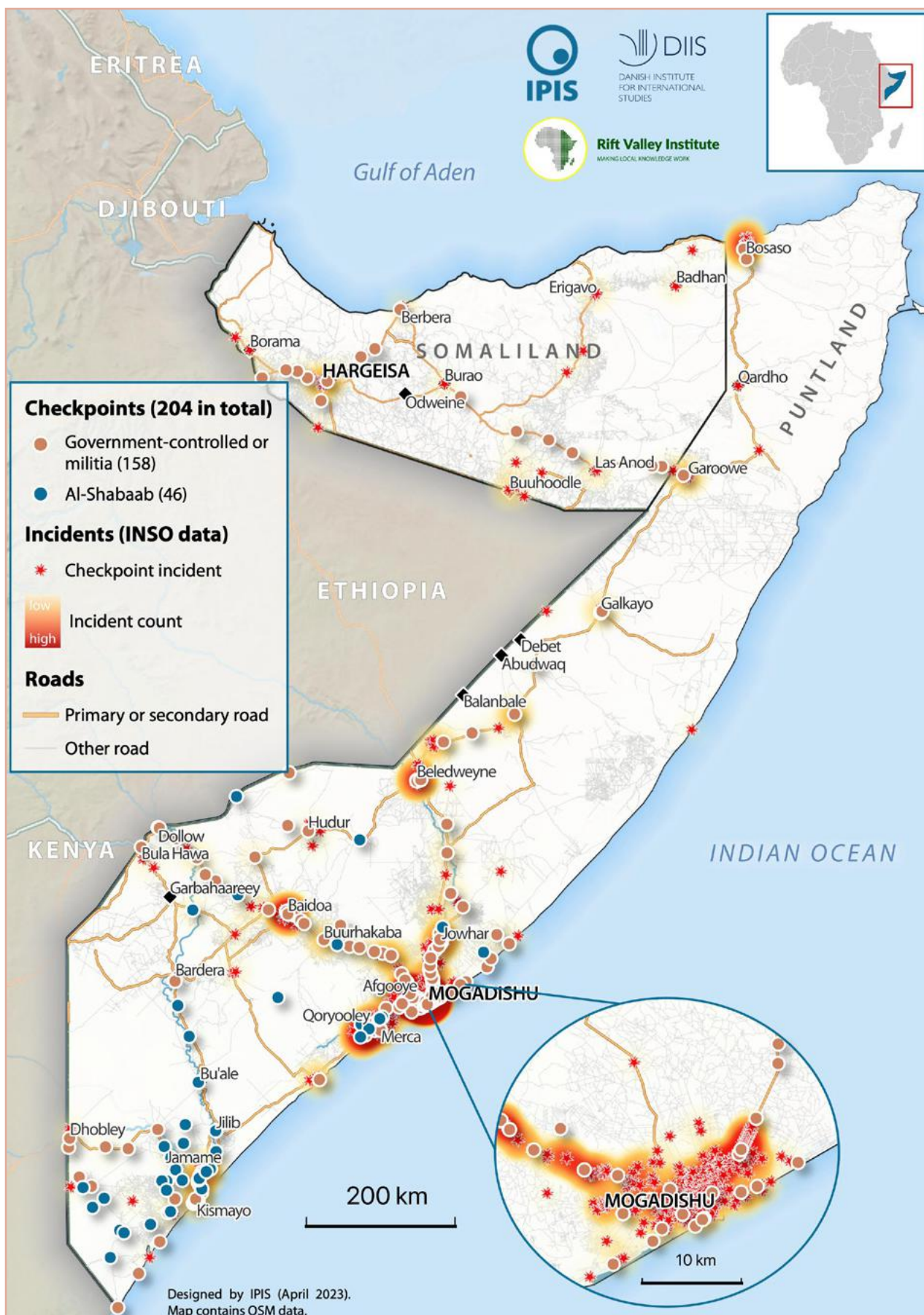
Registered checkpoints per region in Somalia.

Heatmap of checkpoint incidents.

Maps



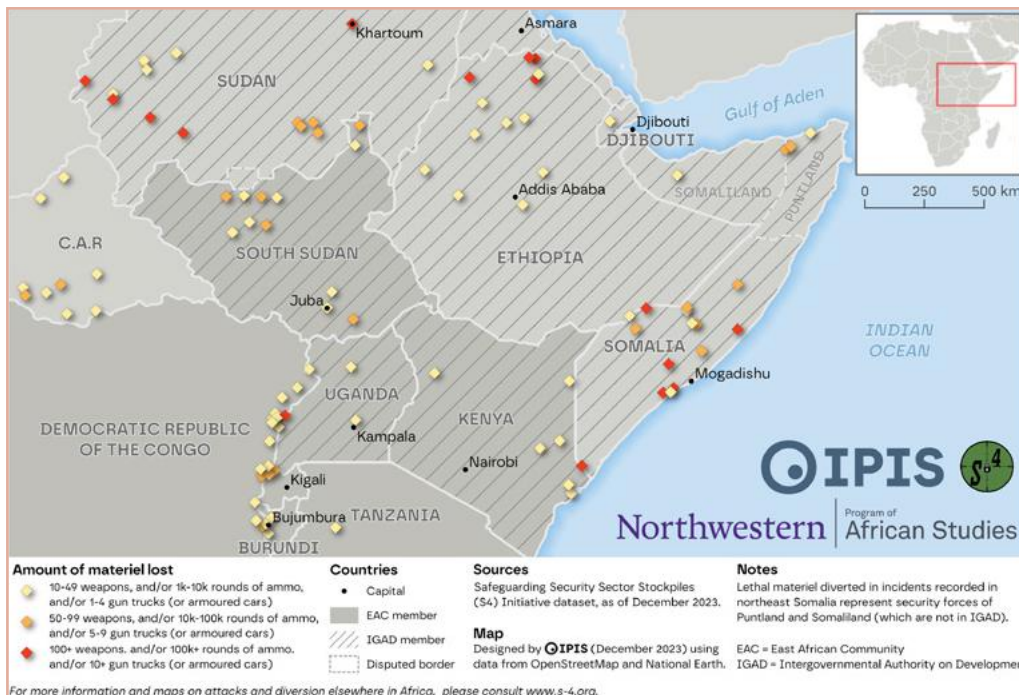
Technical support for a mapping study of checkpoints in Somalia



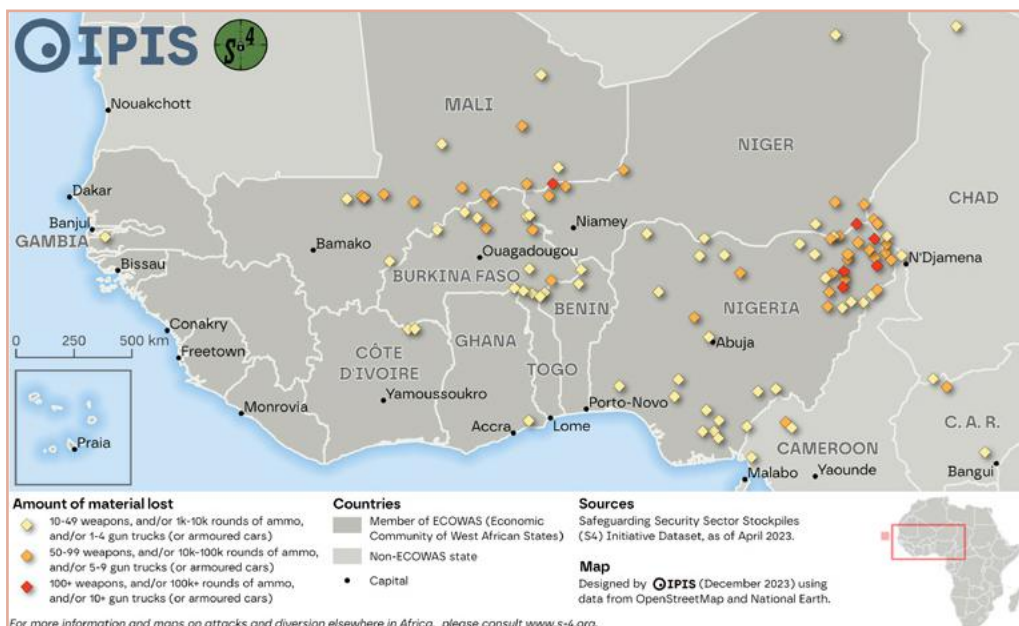
Mapping incidents resulting in the diversion of lethal materiel

In 2023, IPIS continued its collaboration with the Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S4) Initiative to map attacks on security forces resulting in the diversion of lethal materiel. The map of selected

arms capture incidents in West Africa, of which a first version was released in 2022, was updated with 18 new incidents. Additionally, IPIS produced a new map displaying 102 incidents in East Africa.



Selected attacks on security forces and peace operations in the Horn of Africa resulting in the diversion of arms and ammunition (January 2014 to December 2023).



Selected attacks on national security forces and peace operations in West Africa resulting in the diversion of arms and ammunition (January 2018 to December 2022).

Mapathon

On December 7th, IPIS hosted a mapathon for students in the Conflict & Development Studies department at the University of Ghent. This event was part of a course taught by IPIS's associate researcher, Peer Schouten.

IPIS gave the students an introduction to the open-source Tasking Manager by the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOTOSM), which allows volunteers worldwide to contribute to mapping

projects. The students spent a morning using this tool to contribute to a project from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Masisi territory, North Kivu province. MSF is providing humanitarian support within the context of the ongoing M23 crisis but needs accurate maps of roads and buildings in the area. Using satellite images available in HOTOSM, students were able to draw the outlines of 'missing' buildings and roads. This data was later verified by HOTOSM validators and supported MSF's work.

▼ Mapathon.





ABOUT IPIS

Mission statement

IPIS is an independent research institute that provides tailored information, analysis, capacity enhancement, and policy advice to support those actors who want to realize a vision of durable peace, sustainable development, and the fulfillment of human rights.

Throughout the years, IPIS has developed a geographic focus on sub-Saharan Africa and a thematic focus on natural resources, conflict motives of armed actors, business and human rights, and international arms transfers. Within this scope, IPIS strives to be a center of excellence in field-based research.

The research program **Natural Resources** brings in-depth research on the exploitation of natural resources. IPIS has a unique expertise on natural resources, its links to conflict, and its financing, development, environment, human rights, and governance.

The research program **Arms Trade & Security** sheds light on facts related to the opaque international arms trade with and in our region of focus. The analysis of these data offers insights into the consequences of arms flows on conflict and underdevelopment, and recommendations to prevent the proliferation of arms in Sub-Saharan Africa. In this respect, IPIS investigates logistical chains and infrastructure that facilitate arms transfers to our focus region.

The research program **Conflict Mapping** aims to map the various motives of conflict actors. A significant part of this research is devoted to the collection of reliable data on the field and its visualization into cartographic material.

The research program **Business & Human Rights** deals with corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the role of the private sector in our focus region. In the course of many years, we have witnessed the potential of private companies to create wealth and promote peace, as well as conflict and inequality. The research focuses on all aspects of sustainable development, respect for human rights, and the implementation of self-regulatory and legal frameworks.

In order to ensure that our research and expertise reach as wide an audience as possible, IPIS often complements research with capacity enhancement. Increasingly, IPIS offers stand-alone capacity enhancement, designed to meet the needs and knowledge gaps identified by partners and clients. IPIS often deals with sensitive information and in handling this we pursue deontological principles such as reliability, critical sense, impartiality and check & double-check.

Assignments 2023

United for peace and sustainable development in fragile and conflict-affected settings

For the Belgian Development Cooperation

Addressing drivers of conflict, and promoting the fulfillment of human rights, sustainable governance of natural resources, climate justice and environmental protection through evidence-based research and grassroots collaboration

For the European Commission, Foreign Policy Instrument

Madini – Strengthening regional stability in the Great Lakes

For the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Understanding artisanal mining supply chains and conflict financing in DRC

For USAID

Increasing the awareness of policy reform on gender equality issues in ASM and strengthening IPIS' methodological approach by making it gender-sensitive

For USAID

Partnership for the Development of Eastern Congo (P-DEC) – Tujenge

For USAID

Promoting civic space in Tanzania's extractive sector governance

For the Belgian Development Cooperation

Kufatilia – Incident reporting and monitoring

For the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Madini), USAID (P-DEC), European Commission (FPI), Belgian Development Cooperation

Data analysis and design of (web) maps on roadblocks and cross-border trade in Somalia

For the Rift Valley Institute

Using remote sensing technologies to monitor large-scale mining operations in DRC

For PAX

Using satellite imagery to map tree cover loss in and around the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in South Kivu, DRC

For the University of Antwerp, Institute of Development Policy (IOB)

Inception study towards the development of a quantitative statistical mining survey on cobalt mining in the DRC

For the International Labor Organization

Updating the interactive webmap of Swiss-supported Projects in Tanzania

For the Swiss embassy in Tanzania

Preparing 2 chapters for the PanAfGeo handbook on ASM and holding training sessions in Cameroon and Tanzania

For the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland (GEUS)

Development of 2 static maps depicting selected attacks on security forces resulting in the diversion of arms and ammunition in East and West Africa

For Safeguarding Security Sector Stockpiles (S⁴) Initiative

Evaluation of the Belgian approach to fragility commissioned by the Special Evaluation Service (SES) of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For C-Lever.org

Networks and platforms

- Kimberley Process (KP)
- European Partnership for Responsible Mining (EPRM)
- Public Private Alliance for Responsible Mineral Trade (PPA)
- European Network for Central Africa (EurAc)
- Flemish Peace Institute
- Belgian Network on Natural Resources (BNNR)
- Working Group on Corporate Accountability (11.11.11)
- European Raw Materials Coalition

Memberships

- A-net, Library Network of the University of Antwerp
- Flemish Study and Documentation Centre for non-profit organisations (VSDC)
- NGO Federation: Flemish federation of Development NGOs
- Sociare, Socio cultural employers' organisation

◀
 Erik Gobbers,
 speaker at the Cash without conditions event.



Outreach

Lectures, workshops and presentations

January

16 January

Lecture on NGO engagement in multistakeholder platforms at Amsterdam University.

Filip Reyniers

19 January

Consultation with an automotive company artisanal mining supply chains in the DRC, and the role of iTSCI traceability scheme.

Ken Matthysen and Lotte Hoex

February

2 February

Training workshop "Researching extractive resource governance" for HakiRasilimali staff and members (Dar es Salaam) on designing and executing evidence-based studies on extractives.

Mieke Thierens and Elard Mawala

9 February

Lecture at Antwerp Winter University: "Studying African Diamond Mining Communities".

Filip Reyniers

24 February

Online presentation on responsible diamond supply chain during the Inhorgenta jewelry fair in Munich.

Hans Merket

March

6 March

Exchange on the security situation in North Kivu in the context of the M23 crisis during a multistakeholder meeting of the Responsible Mining Insurance (RMI).

Ken Matthysen and Brian Sabbe

13 - 17 March

Exchanges with various Congolese authorities in Kinshasa on the conclusions and recommendations of the report "Taxes and levies at artisanal mining sites in South Kivu and Ituri: how much does an artisanal miner pay?".

Guillaume de Brier

16 March

Presentation on ASM formalization, and challenges around insecurity and conflict financing in the mining sector for the attendees of the PanAf Geo Central Africa regional workshop in Douala.

Lotte Hoex

April

12 April

Hearing at the Belgian Federal Parliament on sanctions against Russian diamonds and traceability challenges.

Hans Merket

13 April

Presentation for the ICGLR on the impact of the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation on producing countries.

Lotte Hoex

19 April

Guest lecture on responsible sourcing of minerals in Central Africa at the Institute of Development Policy (IOB).

Filip Reyniers

24 April

Roundtable at the Egmont Institute on taxes and levies in the gold production sector: L'exploitation artisanale de l'or à l'est de la RDC: obstacles fiscaux et opportunités régionales.

Guillaume de Brier



▲ **OECD session on the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation.**

26 April

OECD Forum on Responsible Minerals Supply Chains: Opening session "Navigating new dynamics of conflict and cooperation in mineral supply chains".

Lotte Hoex

26 April

"The EU Regulation on 3TG minerals: a blueprint for responsible mineral trade?" Discussion on the effectiveness of the regulation at the OECD Forum on Responsible Minerals Supply Chains.

Lotte Hoex and Zacharie Bulakali

27 April

Partner session at the OECD Forum on Responsible Minerals Supply Chains: « L'Exploitation artisanale de l'or à l'est de la RDC: obstacles fiscaux et opportunités régionales ».

Guillaume de Brier and Patient Birindiwa

May

11 May

Training on the design and execution of evidence-based case studies on natural resource governance. A workshop designed for the participants of a new edition of the "Voices from Tanzania", focusing on land acquisition practices in the extractive sectors of northern Tanzania.

Mieke Thierens and Elard Mawala

17 May

Workshop organized by the Madini consortium in Bujumbura to present research findings on taxes and levies in the artisanal gold mining sector in eastern DRC.

Guillaume de Brier and Patient Birindiwa

25 May

Speaker at the OECD Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum. "Countering violent kleptocracy: Natural resource integrity in a war-fraught area".

(Lotte Hoex)

June

9 June

Conference by UGent and VUB: "EU sanctions against Russia: Impact and implementation challenges".

(Hans Merket)

16 June

Policy workshop at the Egmont Institute: "Strengthening the green transition through global gateway and international partnerships.

Guillaume de Brier



◀ **Workshop on EU minerals regulations in Kolwezi.**

21 June

Restitution meeting in Goma on research findings of the artisanal mining site mapping and conflict financing in eastern DRC.

Ken Matthysen and Zacharie Bulakali

21 June

Panel discussion organized by IPIS and Diamonds for Peace in Antwerp: “Empowering African artisanal diamond mining communities for a more responsible supply chain”.

Hans Merket and Han Verleyen

28 June

Provincial restitution forum in Bukavu on the results of the study on taxes and levies in the artisanal mining sector in DRC.

Patient Birindwa

28 June

Roundtable at the Flemish Peace Institute: “Due diligence in defense sector: lessons learned from the diamond and mineral trade”.

Markus Fahlbusch and Hans Merket

28 June

Presentation of IPIS’ research activities to the Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation, Caroline Gennez at IPIS.

Filip Reyniers, Erik Gobbers, Hans Merket, Lisa Loeper

July

7 July

Briefing on natural resources and security in Central Africa at the US embassy in Belgium.

Ken Matthysen, Hans Merket, Filip Reyniers

19 July

Provincial restitution forum in Bunia on the results of the study on taxes and levies in the artisanal mining sector in DRC.

Patient Birindwa

September

6-7 September

Workshop in Kolwezi on the EU Critical Raw Material Act and Battery Regulation.

Lotte Hoex, Guillaume de Brier, Zacharie Bulakali and Patient Birindwa

12 September

Briefing to USAID-Washington on conflict financing and socio-economic dynamics in artisanal mining in DRC.

Ken Matthysen

October

3 October

Workshop by the Madini consortium at the Egmont Institute on artisanal mining and the blue mines’ status in the DRC.

Marieke Haagh and Ken Matthysen

17 October

Online presentation on due diligence in critical mineral supply chains during the Alternative Mining Indaba Zimbabwe.

Lotte Hoex

November

2 November

Presentation at the Special Forum of the Kimberley Process Plenary meeting in Zimbabwe – “How to apply due diligence principles to the diamond trade”.

Hans Merket

6 and 17 November

First annual meeting of the Kufatilia network in Bunia and Bukavu.

Jan Leysen

8 November

Online expert discussion organized by the United Nations University - Centre for Policy Research: “Improving research and policy on interrelated harms of transnational organized crime in fragile and conflict-affected contexts”.

Ken Matthysen

13 November

Presentation on ASM formalization, and challenges around insecurity and conflict financing in the mining sector for the attendees of the PanAf Geo East Africa regional workshop in Tanzania.

Elard Mawala and Lilian Ogolla

▶
**Filip Reyniers at the Cash
without conditions event.**

14 November

EU Critical Raw Materials week “Responsible sourcing and traceability of Critical Raw Materials (CRM)” – Presentation on the need to balance criticality and responsibility in mineral value chains.

Mieke Thierens

23 November

Conference by the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) in Amsterdam: “The diamond trade, recent development and vulnerabilities to crime”.

Hans Merket

23 November

Peace Policy Dialogue with the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other members of the Belgian Peace Network.

Filip Reyniers

30 November

Presentation at the European Parliament on the evaluation of the implementation of the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation.

Lotte Hoex

30 November

IPIS Event: “Securing a responsible cobalt supply chain: EU regulations facing the realities of the Congolese cobalt mining sector”.

Lotte Hoex and Guillaume de Brier

December

6 December

Roundtable organized by the University of Ghent on the impact of global energy transition on communities in artisanal mining regions.

Filip Reyniers

7 December

Mapathon at IPIS. Guided a group of students in a collective mapping exercise using open data from the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOTOSM), to identify non-registered roads and buildings and assist Médecins sans Frontières in the humanitarian activities in Masisi territory within the context of the ongoing M23 crisis.

Thomas Muller, Stefaan Van wal, and Simon Schweitzer

7 December

Presentation and exchanges on the impact evaluation of Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs) at Eight. world’s event “Cash without conditions”.

Erik Gobbers and Filip Reyniers

8 December

Online presentation for IcoCA on the challenges in securing access to remedy and restoring community relations after serious human rights abuse at the Williamson diamond mine.

Hans Merket, Elard Mawala, and Mieke Thierens

13 December

Online presentation to the US State Department on the challenges in securing access to remedy and restoring community relations after serious human rights abuse at the Williamson diamond mine.

Hans Merket, Elard Mawala, and Mieke Thierens

17 December

Presentation to the Informal Law Enforcement Network at the OECD in Paris: “Diamonds, sanctions and challenges for law enforcement”.

Hans Merket

19 December

Human Rights Panel at the Flemish Parliament on the occasion of the 75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (*Lotte Hoex*)



Presence in the media

In 2023, IPIS shared its expertise with diverse Belgian and International media (press, radio and television). Covered topics included the traceability and accountability in the mineral sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania; the sanction of Russian diamonds after the invasion of Ukraine and other diamond governance issues; the impact of minerals-related EU regulations in producing countries.

Mineral extraction in the Democratic Republic of Congo

[How conflict minerals make it into our phones](#)

February 15, 2023 (CNBC)

[RD Congo : le sauvetage impressionnant de creuseurs artisanaux témoigne des risques dans les mines](#)

March 31, 2023 (France 24)

[RD Congo : derrière les massacres oubliés d'Ituri, l'ombre de la milice Codeco](#)

May 5, 2023 (France 24, Les Observateurs)

[De l'or congolais volé par l'ONU ? Non, cette vidéo montre une transaction commerciale en 2020](#)

May 25, 2023 (France 24, Les Observateurs)

[Artisanat minier en RDC : « On a plus besoin d'un esprit coopératif que d'un esprit de critique des uns envers les autres », Hans Merket \(IPIS\)](#)

July 22, 2023 (Agence Ecofin)

[Importations d'or : un secteur brûlant](#)

September 7, 2023 (Médor)

[Primera – RDC : cinq questions pour comprendre la polémique autour du méga-contrat émirati](#)

September 19, 2023 (Jeune Afrique)

EU regulations and their impact in producer countries

[Is Europe losing sight of conflicts in its new critical raw materials act?](#)

March 24, 2023 (EU Observer)

[RDC : 20 ONG européennes appellent l'UE à renforcer l'application des règles contre les minerais de conflits](#)

October 19, 2023 (Deskeco)

[Ores and transparency: what options for Africa?](#)

November 16, 2023 (Business Africa & Initiative Africa)



◀ Hans Merket interviewed by the journalist Hugo Clément.

Diamond governance

[Russian diamonds lose their sparkle in Europe](#)

January 27, 2023 (Politico)

[Botswana's Longtime Diamond Deal With De Beers Under Threat](#)

February 14, 2023 (Voice of America)

[L'invité dans l'actu: Filip REYNIERS – Pas de sanctions européennes contre les diamants russes](#)

February 15, 2023 (RTBF)

[Enquête : la Belgique protège-t-elle le secteur du diamant russe ?](#)

February 21, 2023 (RTBF)

[Antwerpse diamant opnieuw in het vizier: VS linken bedrijven aan financiering Hezbollah](#)

May 5, 2023 (De Morgen)

[The new 'blood diamonds': the elaborate plan to halt Russia's trade](#)

May 10, 2023 (Financial Times)

[Antwerp's diamond dilemma](#)

June 29, 2023 (The Brussels Times)

[« Le Processus de Kimberley est devenu un théâtre de la géopolitique où il y a beaucoup de méfiance », Hans Merket \(IPIS\)](#)

July 20, 2023 (Agence Ecofin)

[De Beers prospects blemished after Botswana cuts new diamond deal](#)

July 25, 2023 (Financial Times)

[How more sanctions on Russian diamonds could affect the global market](#)

August 28, 2023 (The New York Times)

[L'invité dans l'actu: Hans MERKET Chercheur pour l'IPIS en ressources naturelles](#)

October 12, 2023 (RTBF)

[Rough diamond lobbying as G7 targets Russian gems](#)

October 19, 2023 (Politico)

[A Antwerp, les impossibles sanctions contre les diamants russes](#)

October 26, 2023 (Le Monde)

[Kimberley Process Has a Failure to Communicate](#)

November 14, 2023 (JCK Magazine)

[Russian diamonds set for ban under new EU sanctions](#)

December 12, 2023 (BBC)

[Sur le front: Diamants que cachent nos bagues de fiançailles ?](#)

December 18, 2023 (France 5)

[How your holiday diamond may be funding Russia's war](#)

December 21, 2023 (The Washington Post)

Business and human rights in Tanzania

[Study Recommends Measures Petra Diamonds Can Restore Community Relations](#)

November 22, 2023 (The Chanzo Initiative)

[How Tanzania can boost local content development](#)

July 16, 2023 (The Citizen)

Website and social media

IPIS reaches its audience via its website and social media channels such as Twitter and LinkedIn.

60,988 users

4,223 followers

2,850 followers

660 subscribers

IPIS Team

On 31 December 2023, the IPIS team was composed of the following persons:

Filip Reyniers
Director

Hans Merket
Researcher

Laure Gerig
Communication Officer

Simon Schweitzer
GIS Intern

Anne Hullebroeck
Office manager

Han Verleyen
Programme Manager

Lisa Loeper
Programme Manager

Alexei Delanghe
Research &
Communication Intern

Peter Danssaert
Researcher

Mieke Thierens
Researcher

Markus Fahlbusch
Researcher

Ken Matthysen
Researcher

Elard Mawala
Liaison Officer Tanzania

Jan Leysen
Programme Manager

Zacharie Bulakali
Liaison Officer DRC

Erik Gobbers
Researcher

Lilian Ogolla
Project Officer

Associate Researchers

Lotte Hoex
Researcher & Policy
Manager

Thomas Muller
GIS & Data Researcher

Marieke Haagh
Researcher

Peer Schouten

Guillaume de Brier
Researcher

Patient Birindwa
Liaison Officer DRC

Stefaan Van wal
GIS & Data Researcher

Liliana Lizarazo

Rodriguez

Brian Wood

Fiona Southward

Steven Spittaels



Board of directors

On 01/01/2023, the Board was composed of the following persons:

Chair

Johan Swinnen

Honorary Ambassador, former diplomat.

Members

Jean Reynart

Former Director of the Belgian/ Flemish NGO federation and former program coordinator of 11.11.11, the coalition of NGO's, unions, movements and various solidarity groups in Flanders.

Saartje Boutsen

Advisor on Sustainable Business at Studio.D.

Dirk Timmermans

Education Advisor – Coordinator, Chair of the UN Association workgroup Education.

Arnim Langer

Professor of International Politics at KU Leuven and Director of the Center for Peace Research and Development (CRPD).

Eva Berghmans

Expert in human rights and migration issues.

Eric de Deckere


Sustainability Manager at the European Chemical Industry Council and former academic researcher at the Institute of Development Policy (IOB), University of Antwerp.

Loïc De Cannière

Co-founder of Incofin IM, an independent impact investment management company.

Contact

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